Commentary

Volume Seventy-seven, Number Two, February 1984

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Ruth R. Wisse

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BOOKS:
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A. Lawrence Chickering

The Democrats and Their Rules
Penn Kemble

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Commentary

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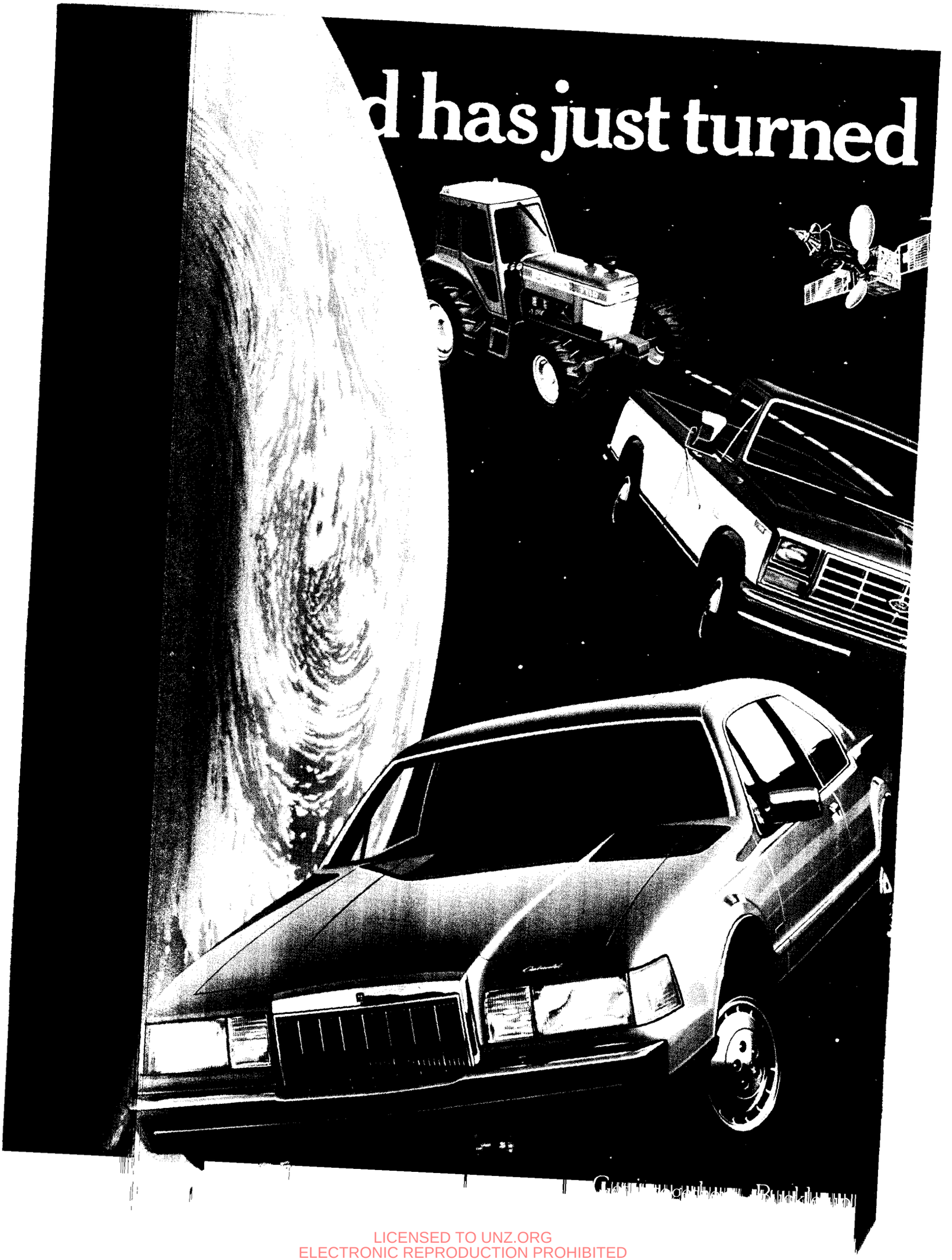

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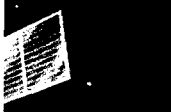

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Letters from Readers

Yellow Rain

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Without wishing to comment on the substance of Lucio Lami's article, "Yellow Rain: The Conspiracy of Closed Mouths" [October 1983], let me just inform you that the last two paragraphs concerning an officer of UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] are totally devoid of truth and invented either by Mrs. Adelia Bernard or by Mr. Lami himself, who has repeated this accusation on several occasions in spite of all our very formal denials. Never has Mark Malloch Brown, then UNHCR officer in Thailand, received any sort of plastic sphere with "valves and tubes, inside of which lay the dead body of a three-year-old baby," as Mr. Lami states. Never has such a macabre parcel been "deposited on the desk of Mark Brown."

LEON DAVICO
Chief of Public Information
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Geneva, Switzerland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to apologize for an error that appeared in my translation of Lucio Lami's article on yellow rain. In my translation, I gave the date of an encounter between Adelia Bernard and a representative of UNHCR as 1982; it should have been given as April 1980. This typographical error in fact was printed in *il Giornale nuovo* when the story first appeared, but Mr. Lami quickly caught and corrected it in a letter to the editor two days later. I translated from the original text and missed the correction. I apologize for any confusion this may have caused your readers.

MICHAEL LEDEEN
Washington, D. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is only one point in Lucio Lami's article, "Yellow Rain: The Conspiracy of Closed Mouths," with which I would agree, and that is that the evidence on the subject of yellow rain and its mode of presentation do indeed suggest a conspiracy, but not that which is troubling Mr. Lami. . . .

Mr. Lami claims both that evidence for the use of chemical weapons is overwhelmingly plentiful and that it has been suppressed by the UN with the aid of some Western journalists. How such censorship could be exercised by the UN organizations, when the U.S. government, using evidence gathered by its own personnel along the Thai-Cambodian and Thai-Lao borders, has published its own reports and otherwise trumpeted its story to the world, is not made clear. Indeed, Mr. Lami seems quite unaware of those U.S. government documents, which for all their weaknesses are far superior to Mr. Lami's documentation, and which show, with respect to Mr. Lami's first general point, that the *evidence*, apart from scatter-gun allegations, is pitifully scarce and weak, and becomes progressively weaker as new information about the natural occurrences of mycotoxins, the alleged new yellow-rain poisons, is discovered.

On the subject of such evidence, and its collection, I can do no better than recommend Grant Evans's *The Yellow Rainmakers*, which demonstrates in great detail how the stories from Laos are most probably mass hysteria plus some disinformation, while the apparently genuine instances of mycotoxin poisoning in Cambodia are probably of natural origin. Particular attention should be given to Evans's demolition of the story of one star Hmong yellow-rain witness, a man who when Evans interviewed him had given his story thirteen times to various Western organizations and journalists (Evans, pp. 58 ff.).

I have no doubt that Mr. Lami heard allegations of gas attacks on the Cambodian and Laotian borders, and by their very nature and presentation there is no way to disprove them, but Evans's book demonstrates the care such claims require. It is not permissible simply to accept someone's assertion that he was hit by "poison gas," and still less to accept that as evidence for a new generation of chemical weapons being used by the Vietnamese.

Although Mr. Lami's story of the two Son Sann soldiers whom he met at Ban Sangae cannot be disproved, Dr. Amos Townsend's report of August 19, 1983, of which I have a copy, indicates the carelessness with which evidence from those alleged gas attacks of January 1983 has been collected and assessed. Townsend, referring to one case in which

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the autopsy of a soldier killed in an assumed gas attack had indicated "toxic hepatitis" as the cause of death, hinted that the medical analysis must have been incompetent or dishonest.

Townsend also described his encounter, at Ban Sangae in August 1983, with an alleged victim of a January incident, who claimed to have previously been healthy and who in August showed symptoms consistent with respiratory infection and dengue fever. Townsend expressed some reservation about the man's reliability, but believed that "he needs further study." Unaccountably, Townsend then departed from Ban Sangae and left the collection of blood samples to Adelia Bernard. In his report he expressed the hope of finding the man again at a later date, although he knew full well the great difficulty in retrieving people in the confused conditions of the border camps. No doubt we shall eventually see that soldier as a yellow-rain statistic in some U.S. government report.

One of Mr. Lami's stories, the storage of "chemical weapons in the former house of the oblates" in Ban Hue Sai, is of a type discounted even by Townsend and his associates. In a report of August 25, 1983, one of the latter described how a self-proclaimed Thai secret agent in a border town tried to sell them some chemical-warfare liquid recently stolen from storage in the "Lao President's government office in Vientiane." They of course refused his offer. One of the things distinguishing the serious yellow-rain researchers (even if they are misguided) from the mad-hatters is that they know that Vietnamese, or Soviet, chemical corpsmen would keep their poisons in proper storage facilities, not in odd places like a former seminary or the President's office.

Mr. Lami's story of a Vietnamese gas mask, even if true, means nothing, since gas masks are standard equipment in all armies; and the detail of the West German embassy secretly negotiating to acquire the gas mask from the "Khmer Blancs" (a meaningless term illustrating Mr. Lami's ignorance of the area) tends to discredit the story entirely.

It is certainly not true that all the embassies in Bangkok consider the evidence irrefutable, and this has been one of the difficulties in the U.S. government campaign. Indeed, last year the Australian and British governments announced that yellow-rain samples sent to them for analysis were fakes (Evans, pp. 101-02 on the Australian case). There is even some doubt that the U.S. government still believes its own propaganda. On April 7, 1983, Robert L. Rau of the U.S. Naval Academy's political-science department, on a U.S.-government-sponsored lecture tour, told the staff of Adelaide University's Center for Asian Studies that "no one" in Washington, except for a small corner of the State Department, any longer took the yellow-rain stories seriously. Moreover, Dr. Amos Townsend's yellow-rain research efforts lack funds, and the two Bangkok embassy officers who were most energetic in assisting Townsend have been routinely transferred and replaced by new men who have indicated to Townsend that they will not exert the same efforts in yellow-rain research. Also of interest is the fact that one person involved in the early collection of yellow-rain evidence told me in 1982 that the Pol Pot people were quite capable of feeding toxin to their own soldiers in order to make an anti-Vietnamese case, something consistent with the circumstance that the most potent of the alleged mycotoxins could be made by any literate person or bought wholesale (Evans, p. 101).

Neither is there agreement among medical personnel in the camps about the reality of yellow rain, or other kinds of new chemical and biological warfare (CBW). The medical evidence is inconclusive; most of the alleged "gassing" symptoms could just as well have other causes (see Evans, pp. 92-93, 95, 100, 117-18, 122-23); and where mycotoxins have really been found, in some Cambodian patients, their behavior has been inconsistent with dissemination by weapons and is more reasonably explained by natural occurrence in contaminated food (Evans, pp. 98-99; and Lee Torrey, "Yellow Rain: Is It Really a Weapon?," *New Scientist*, August 4, 1983, pp. 350-51).

This inconsistency of opinion within medical circles also comes through clearly in the aforementioned report of Amos Townsend, with Townsend hinting at political motivations of those doctors who do not support the yellow-rain cause. No doubt political considerations are relevant, but the political preconceptions of those who support yellow-rain charges lead them to assume the truth of "gas attacks," etc., and devise circular explanations to accommodate the most diverse symptoms, while medical personnel not politically predisposed to accept yellow rain seem impelled to adopt the scientifically more acceptable methodology of proceeding from the observed symptoms and laboratory analyses to indications of the causes.

Certainly there is no evidence, though, of a political cover-up by doctors of the Red Cross or other agencies working for the UN. If there were the slightest truth in this it would have appeared in the U.S. government reports and in the reports of Amos Townsend, several of which I have read, and which provide much of the material on which the U.S. government documents are based.

In this connection, Mr. Lami should tell us just how he knows what went on in Red Cross meetings and what was allegedly deleted from the transcripts. Townsend has not complained that the Red Cross denies assistance to gas victims, and his alleged complaint about suppressed results of an autopsy on a Cambodian woman killed at the border and transported to Khao I Dang in November 1982 is directly contradicted by his report of August 19, 1983. There he noted that he had just recently obtained permission from Task Force 80, the Thai military unit in overall control of the refugee camps, to bring possible CBW victims to Khao I Dang for study and treatment, but he had "not 'tested the system as yet.'"

It is not true that the medical organizations in the refugee and border camps "are under UN control" with respect to medical practice, or that "they have adapted to these methods and deny help to gas victims." The medical work in the camps is undertaken by private voluntary groups, mostly from the United States, France, Germany, Thailand, and the United Kingdom, with international personnel of diverse nationalities and backgrounds. The UN could not, even if it wished, order them to refuse necessary treatment. Some of the medical teams belong to devout Christian organizations which are strongly anti-Communist, believe firmly in yellow rain, and would not fail to complain loudly of any UN interference with their medical ethics.

If there were really a conspiracy on the border to suppress information about yellow rain or to turn

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away patients suffering from its effects, the conspiracy would have to include not only the UN and voluntary agencies, but the Bangkok U.S. embassy, the CIA, and the Thai military, all of whom have agents patrolling the border areas, as well as the Pol Pot-Son Sann-Sihanouk coalition, which in all of its most exaggerated propaganda has never claimed that international medical teams refused treatment nor that the UN was suppressing evidence. Mr. Lami probably got such fanciful stories from Adelia Bernard, whom he expressly credits as the source of his last, and most fantastic, tale.

Adelia Bernard is a resident of Melbourne, Australia, who has spent some time working with a Thai Catholic organization, COERR (Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees), in the refugee camps, and she has purveyed a certain amount of lurid anti-Vietnamese material to the Australian press (the *Age*, Melbourne, March 19, 1983). Being familiar with her name and convictions, I made inquiries about her activities during my latest trip to Thailand in August-September 1983, in particular at UNHCR in Bangkok, where there are several people whom I have known and have met annually or semi-annually since 1980 when I also worked in the Cambodian refugee camps, and where one key employee has been my acquaintance for over ten years.

Although it is logically impossible to prove a negative, that is to prove that Mrs. Bernard has never sneaked into Cambodia, no one familiar with the border or the interior of Cambodia gives credence to her story of traveling clandestinely to Phnom Penh, a story which, stripped of the lurid details imparted to Mr. Lami, is otherwise well known and treated as a joke. All agree on the utter impossibility of such a trip.

Even more stupefying is the claim to have brought a corpse, in tropical heat, from Phnom Penh to the border (a two-day trip in the best, non-clandestine circumstances), negotiated it through the multiple Khmer and Thai checkpoints at the border, taken it to Bangkok (another day), and finally dragged it up to Mark Brown's office on the crowded third floor of the UN building, where all visitors have to sign in at a security desk and where large packages are examined.

Had anything like that ever occurred, it is certain that there would have been a major scandal both within the UN building and at Thai security services. Mrs. Bernard might well have found herself detained for violation of several laws, and I would not have been able to converse with my UNHCR acquaintances during two or three days without hearing of the incident.

It is also worth asking why Adelia Bernard, on April 13, 1983, in a talk before the Community Aid Abroad group in Melbourne, boasted of her "secret" trip to Phnom Penh, but did not relate any of the lurid adventures reported by Mr. Lami; why she also failed to mention them in her atrocity-mongering interview with the *Age*; and why she did not report them to Dr. Townsend when she met him at the Ban Sangae camp

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on the Thai-Cambodian border on August 11, 1983.

If she had really acquired evidence of Vietnamese or Soviet CBW atrocities in Cambodia, the logical person to approach would have been Townsend, already known then as an activist in the yellow-rain cause, who could have organized medical examination of the evidence, not Mark Brown, who was neither administratively concerned with medical matters nor of sufficient authority to effect a scientific investigation. Brown could not possibly have dismissed Adelia Bernard's corpse and apparatus, but would have had to refer the case to his superiors. . . .

Whatever the whole truth behind the diverse yellow-rain and CBW stories may be, Lucio Lami's article is a tissue of wild rumors and lies, and he shows total ignorance of even the official U.S. statements on the question. It should be clear that I do not believe that the Vietnamese are using yellow rain or any other mysterious new CBW agents in Laos and Cambodia, but I would agree that all of the evidence is not in, and that further careful, objective scientific investigations are required. . . .

MICHAEL VICKERY
Center for Asian Studies
University of Adelaide
Adelaide, Australia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lucio Lami's article on the continuing agony of Southeast Asia should be read by every good-hearted humanitarian who ever paraded a Vietcong flag through the asphalt paddies of Western (especially American) campuses and cities. Unfortunately, it probably won't be.

It seems that the free peoples of Asia, along with those in Communist Asia who refuse to see the horror foisted on their homelands as "liberation," have very few champions among the influential opinion-makers of the West. For their failure to recognize the nobility of the social experiment in which they have been forced to take part, the Khmer and Hmong (to say nothing of vast numbers of Chinese, Koreans, Tibetans, Vietnamese, and others) have possibly lost their humanity in the eyes of the Western liberal intelligentsia. Thus, their excision from the family of man is perhaps social surgery rather than genocide. The Communist Mengele mentioned by Mr. Lami (is he Vietnamese? Cambodian? Soviet? does it matter?) may go to bed at night secure in the knowledge that he will forever be given the benefit of the doubt in intellectual, religious, political, and media circles in the West. . . .

PETER HERZ
Chutung, Taiwan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While researching a paper on yellow rain, I was as dismayed as Lucio Lami by the effectively nonexistent coverage given the story by the media—with the powerful exception of the *Wall Street Journal*. Contrast this meager exposure with the expansive treatment given dioxin and the herbicide Agent Orange. The New York *Times*, which has covered the story better than most, has devoted almost as much space to the problems with particular pieces of evidence as it has given the main story itself. CBS and NBC have not seriously investigated the story.

The reluctance of the media to examine the unclassified evidence, available from a multitude of sources including the Canadian government, suggests that the public has been and will continue to be similarly uninformed about other possible Soviet violations of arms-control treaties. . . .

ROBERTSON MORROW
New Haven, Connecticut

LUCIO LAMI writes:

In the extravagant letter from Michael Vickery there is just one point that is worthy of serious attention, and that is where he writes that my article "is a tissue of wild rumors." In fact, he repeats there, by some sort of Freudian inspiration, the same words that Professor Albert Bayet of the Sorbonne used in an attempt to discredit Soviet defector Igor Kravchenko's book, *I Chose Freedom*, in the celebrated libel trial in Paris in 1949. The skeptical intellectuals repeat themselves: they don't believe the eyewitnesses, but only "scientific" reports. The gulags, unfortunately, survive their doubts.

1. I have been in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia many times over several years. I have spoken with victims of poison gas and with their attending doctors. I have identified them, by name, in my articles in the Italian press. Yet Mr. Vickery, on the basis of his reading, says that these witnesses are incompetent or in bad faith. He also speaks of Dr. Amos Townsend's doubts. Townsend said to me in 1982 that he had no doubts about the use of poison gas by the Vietnamese, but in 1983 he admitted that although he still had the same conviction, he had to obey instructions from his embassy. The new doubts, in short, have political roots.

2. The gas mask that I found is said to prove nothing, since all armies use gas masks. But do they wear them in combat for no reason? And do the Vietnamese wear them to protect themselves from their own chemical weapons, or because they are afraid that the Cambodian resistance uses such weapons? How is one to explain the awarding of the Ho Chi Minh medal to the Vietnamese chemical units, a gesture that was publicly hailed on April 18, 1981 on Radio Hanoi by General Trong Tan?

I found the gas mask, as I wrote, at Non Chan. By a simple *lapsus*, I wrote, "among the Khmer Blanc" instead of the Khmer Rouge, and Mr. Vickery is astonished (his forerunner, at the Kravchenko trial, screamed, "The author calls the same village by the name of Ackhabad once, and in another place he calls it Stalinabad. Therefore he knows nothing of Russia").

3. Mr. Vickery writes that "unaccountably" Townsend gave blood samples to Adelia Bernard. But this is hardly unaccountable: Townsend, like me, trusts the woman. Moreover, samples of contaminated materials have always encountered obstacles in arriving at their destination. Often they arrive late at the Thai borders. They almost always arrive in deteriorated condition in Western laboratories, if they arrive at all. When the UN sent an investigatory commission (about which they still laugh in Thailand), its members refused to go to the areas in which the gas was launched. I asked Townsend if he had spoken with the UN "investigators," and he replied (in an interview with me in 1982) that he had been uncertain whether to do it, since he knew that the head of the group, within the UN, was a Soviet, Ustinov. In any case, he gave them a briefing on his findings and offered them a sample he had taken. The head of the delegation then told Townsend that he was not interested in the samples, but would accept them, since otherwise the commission would be attacked by the press.

So the samples have had a tough life, and I do not trust analyses

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conducted over a distance of thousands of miles, often by people who are ideologically involved and who are capable of believing that the Laotians die from bee excrement (and that the bees were constipated for years, since they have only recently become lethal). But there are specialists and researchers who work along the frontiers, like Dr. Jibhong Jayavasu, who for years have vainly asked for equipment to do chemical analyses immediately after the gas attacks. Dr. Jibhong works at Arania Pratet, on the Cambodian border.

4. Concerning the deposit of chemical weapons at Ban Hue Sai, I have the testimony of a university student who lives there. This firsthand account is challenged by Mr. Vickery on the basis of his opinions concerning more suitable places traditionally chosen by the Soviets. But his is not a refutation, only a tedious argument *ad hominem*.

5. The fact that Townsend did not write about his protest to the Red Cross in his reports does not mean that he did not make the protest. He in fact made it on November 4, 1982. In a meeting on that date, Townsend asked why the International Red Cross refused to accept gas victims, and he named the cases in question. Father Bourlet, director of COERR, was present at the meeting. On December 2, 1982, at a meeting of the Coordinating Committee for Services to Dispersed Persons in Thailand, Dr. Jibhong pleaded with the doctors to obey their professional oaths, and to stop following political and personal interests. This statement as well disappeared from the minutes. But the witnesses are alive.

The relief organizations are under the sway of orders from UNHCR, and they have made some pro-Vietnamese political choices. If this were not true, it would be impossible to explain the stonewalling of journalists. This also explains why certain Catholic organizations, simply because they are not pro-Vietnam or pro-Soviet, are boycotted. And it is absurd to look for confirmation of these stories in American documents, since the United States is conducting an ambiguous policy on the question of poison gas in that part of the world.

In Panat Nikon, entering clandestinely into the refugee camp, I interviewed the Vietnamese Captain Nguyen Quan, a deserter, who fought with chemical weapons. The captain told me how and where he was trained, which chemical weapons he used, and where they were used. His report, of which I have a copy, was given to the Americans, and they promised to permit him to move to the United States. This promise was then broken—Quan says—when he refused to strike from his report the passage in which he wrote that the Vietnamese used some quantities of gas left behind by the Americans in Vietnam. The Vietnam syndrome creates such complexes, evidently.

6. The Brown case. The story of Adelia Bernard exists as an official document, in the official record of

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the Australian government (*Hansard*) for May 1981. It was certainly transmitted officially to the UN, which has never referred to it. Why? I have tapes (both audio and video) of Mrs. Bernard's story, and I wrote it just as she told it. By the time I did so, it had already been published a year before in the Rome paper *il Tempo*, and had not been denied. The only reaction to the story, which was written by the journalist Clara Falcone, came from groups in Rome friendly to UNHCR, who described Miss Falcone as a "maniac," the same treatment that is now being given to Mrs. Bernard. But Adelia Bernard is not crazy, and is not a "maniac." She is the daughter of an Italian admiral and is married to an Australian businessman. She works as a member of a Catholic refugee organization, COERR, and has had contacts with the Vatican during a trip to Rome, during which she was praised by the Italian press.

When my story first appeared in *il Giornale Nuovo* in Milan, Mark Brown himself did nothing. Instead, I received a written denial from Leon Davico, of the Information Office of UNHCR, similar to the one he has now sent to COMMENTARY. I published Mr. Davico's letter in *il Giornale Nuovo*, and I invited Mark Brown to a face-to-face encounter with Adelia Bernard, in front of television cameras. She agreed, and Mr. Davico replied that Mr. Brown had also accepted. But when it came time to organize the debate, Mr. Brown withdrew.

7. It would be unfortunate if morbid curiosity about Mrs. Bernard's story caused us to lose sight of the basic problem: the shameful behavior of UNHCR. UNHCR has conducted a pro-Soviet and pro-Vietnamese policy. It has forced Cambodian refugee children to return to Cambodia, after negotiating the question directly with Phnom Penh. These children were subsequently sent to Eastern Europe for "reeducation." In response to this scandal, the Dutchman Van Bowen, the head of the Human Rights section of the UN, resigned, and Edmond Kaiser, the founder of the humanitarian organization Terre des Hommes, accused UNHCR of having stained with blood the Nobel Peace Prize which it had received in 1981. Against such policies all protest seems useless (even including the one in January 1982 by Thai lawyers in Paris who declared that the majority of child prostitutes in Thailand were recruited in refugee camps under UNHCR control).

The refugees in these camps have also endured forced recruitment by the resistance; kidnappings; vendettas; assassinations; and even crucifixions. Mr. Vickery, who has spent so much time around the camps, has he seen or heard nothing of all this? Probably not, since he is so intent on reading the reports of the "specialists." Or does he dismiss the accounts of the refugees themselves because he considers them tainted by anti-Communism?

Deterrence

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "On Nuclear Morality" [October 1983], Charles Krauthammer is so absorbed in looking for contradictions in the thought of those with whom he disagrees that he fails to notice that his own argument against the freeze is logically inconsistent.

Mr. Krauthammer notes that an important requirement of deterrence is "survivability," and proceeds to judge the freeze by its impact on "the ability of one's weapons to sustain a first strike and still deliver a second strike." Surprisingly, he discusses submarine and bomber survivability, but says not a word about ICBM's. He fails to mention that the improved accuracy of warheads inherent in the "modernization" of American and Soviet forces will increase the vulnerability of missile silos and command centers.

This oversight is most striking in Mr. Krauthammer's discussion of the Trident submarine. By focusing on the submarine itself and not the missiles it will carry (they are referred to, and only parenthetically, as "longer-range missiles"), Mr. Krauthammer avoids describing the effect of the counterforce-capable Trident-2 missile on Soviet ICBM survivability, crisis-stability, and, yes, deterrence.

When one looks at how the freeze will affect the survivability of ICBM's and command centers, a different picture emerges. One finds that it is *not* built on "[t]he assumption that high weapons levels in themselves increase the likelihood of war" but on the recognition that highly accurate weapons like the MX, Trident 2, and the Soviet SS-X-24 will decrease stability by putting hard targets at increased risk. A freeze would halt the deployment of these weapons and also impose a flight-test ban that would reduce a potential attacker's confidence in the accuracy of already-deployed weapons, making preemptive attack less likely.

This inconsistent application of the survivability criterion is a direct result of Mr. Krauthammer's presumption that the counterforce/countervalue controversy is merely an "intramural debate among deterrence advocates." If, as Mr. Krauthammer contends, both counterforce and countervalue are types of deterrences, and if, as he implies, the differences between them are of merely academic import, then one need not be concerned if counterforce-capable weapons increase the vulnerability of ICBM's and command centers.

It is hard to believe Mr. Krauthammer is unaware that the administration's primary justification for the MX and Trident-2 missiles is the provocative contention that counterforce capabilities strengthen deterrence. Far from being moot, the controversy over counterforce is central to the national debate over weapons policy.

BENJAMIN ABELOW
Religious Action Center of the
Commission on Social Action of
Reform Judaism
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Though unilateralism is a hopeless cause in the reality of today's world, I feel impelled to comment briefly on Charles Krauthammer's statement, "Far from being a guarantor of survival, unilateralism is a threat to it." The decision to build and modernize nuclear weapons has been justified as essential for the preservation of freedom, endangered by aggressive Communism. Freedom is the noblest human birthright. The greatest sacrifices have been made in its defense in times of war and of peace, as a holy duty and patriotic responsibility. . . . [But] the willingness to use nuclear weapons contains a risk to the continuation of civilization. This would mean the end of the ideal which we pretend to preserve by any means.

It is doubtful whether the Soviet Union would subjugate the Western world as a consequence of our unilateral nuclear disarmament. Is it not obvious that it cannot digest its present possessions? But let us assume that we would come under

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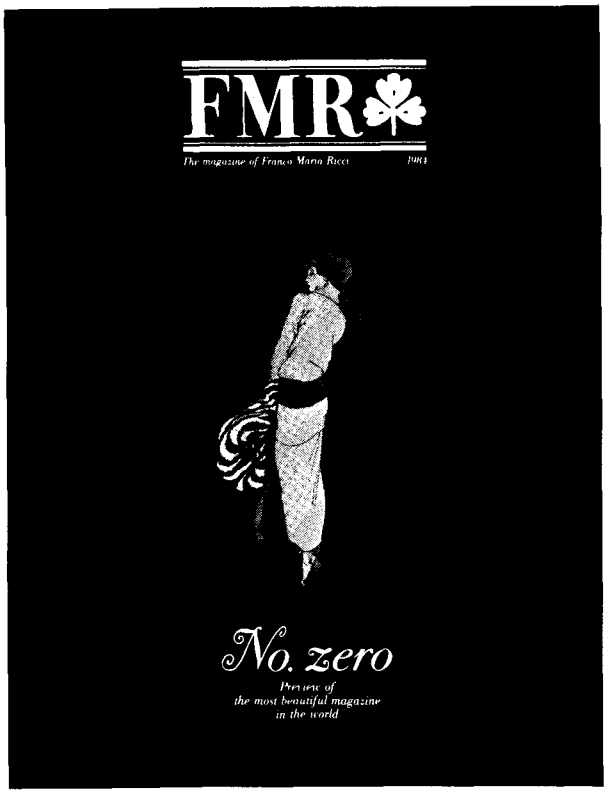

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the rule of Communism and our way of life and the external expression of freedom would end. Just as faith in God cannot be abolished through force and atheistic indoctrination, so the ideal of freedom, a "self-evident" truth, cannot be eradicated from human consciousness. In the course of historic time it would experience a new birth. . . .

This letter is inspired by the hope that the religious evolution of the last two thousand years has a purpose and will lead the Christian world to the acceptance of unilateralism, i.e., the offering of the other cheek, before it is too late.

[Rabbi] SIMON FRIEDEMAN
Fort Myers, Florida

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER writes:

Benjamin Abelow's letter contains two interesting oversights. He overlooks first the distinction between the first-strike capacity of a weapon and the first-strike capacity of a country (or, to put it another way, between a counterforce weapon and a counterforce arsenal). Any accurate ballistic missile is a potential first-strike weapon, but unless one side possesses such a weapon in enough numbers, it does not acquire a first-strike capacity. Thus the MX, which is fast and accurate, could theoretically give the U.S. a first-strike capacity, but not in the numbers the U.S. is building. The administration picked the number 100 for precisely that reason. Since a first-strike arsenal is one that is able to assign two accurate warheads to every enemy silo, the 100 MX's with 1,000 warheads are grossly inadequate for the task. Deterrence holds.

The other notable oversight on Mr. Abelow's part is his delicate mentioning of the "Soviet SS-X-24," an experimental missile which has yet to be deployed and which the freeze would therefore stop. He omits to mention the SS-18's and SS-19's which are very much in existence and which the freeze would do nothing about. Not only are these first-strike weapons, but the Soviets have built them in such enormous numbers that they constitute a first-strike arsenal (against one leg of the American strategic triad, the land-based missile force). Mr. Abelow doesn't mention these missiles because the freeze would in effect sanction the continued existence of this agent of strategic instability. One of the purposes of the MX and Trident 2 is to persuade the Soviets that we have the capacity to match this kind of destabilizing force if necessary; i.e., unless they agree to reduce their first-strike weapons to a level below that of a first-strike arsenal. That's called a bargaining chip, and if Mr. Abelow has a better way to persuade the Soviets to reduce their SS-18's and 19's, one would be interested to hear it.

I purposely did not take sides in the counterforce versus countervalue deterrence debate, because it was not central to the question of the morality or immorality of deterrence. Clearly counterforce arsenals threaten deterrence, but subarsenal levels of counterforce weaponry can contribute to deterrence in the following way: pure countervalue threats are not very credible, since they give the attacked party only a single suicidal option for retaliation; a noncredible threat deters weakly, unstably, or not at all; the existence of a more limited—and thus more credible—response can thus deter attack in ways that threats of countervalue retaliation cannot. That is the deterrent function of counterforce weapons (and the basis of our deterrence doctrine in Europe). As a believer in arms control, I would, however, like to see the numbers of such weapons kept, by mutual agreement, always below a level that would grant either side a first-strike arsenal.

As for Rabbi Friedeman, like all pacifists he has every right to offer his cheek, but not mine.

Government

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In James Nuechterlein's discussion of George Will ["George Will and American Conservatism," October 1983] insufficient attention is paid to the distinction between "strong" government and "big" government. The United States is burdened by "big" government but at the same time is paralyzed by "weak" government, perhaps the weakest government in the West. Will and many other conservatives (myself included) believe that a "strong" government will be necessary to solve the problems facing us.

What is the difference in these terms? A weak government is a state which cannot resist the demands of every special-interest group; a state which cannot pursue an independent course in behalf of the national interest; a state whose leaders cannot make a move without first consulting the opinion polls or the comments of newscasters. Such a state must expand in size as it redistributes more and more of the nation's resources and creates more and more classes of social privilege in accordance with the demands of lobbyists. It must cater to such demands because without the support of the lobbyists, its leaders cannot win reelection. In contrast, a strong state is able to resist these demands and maintain a smaller, more effective administration dedicated to the essential and legitimate functions of government.

For a strong state to exist in a democracy, there must be a feeling of community which serves as proof against the "class warfare" or "beggar thy neighbor" philosophies which undergird the redistributionist state. There must be restraint, moderation, and patience. There must even be a substantial feeling of self-sacrifice (duty) to the common good and a preference for long-run progress over short-run gain.

Currently, big government is associated with individualism and democracy, as each person attempts to use his political power to gain benefits for himself regardless of the effects on others. The feelings of self-interest and competition which flow from individualism are usually linked to capitalism and are thus looked upon favorably by conservatives. But there is no reason for an individualist to limit his field to capitalism if he feels he can gain from socialism or any other "ism." It is the ends, not the means, which count in a materialistic society which lacks traditional limitations on behavior.

Government must be inculcated with values which resist this trend. And government must possess the power to defend these values against all pressures to abandon them. Thus, government must be strong. Conservatives cannot be libertarians. Conservatives need the state as a defender of certain principles and the guardian of order. In the current environment, government must be strengthened if it is to be limited.

WILLIAM R. HAWKINS
Radford University
Radford, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his remarks on George Will's *Statecraft as Soulcraft*, James Nuechterlein takes issue with Will's assertion that "The great civil-rights

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legislation . . . was supposed to alter the operation of the minds of many white Americans. . . . [The civil-rights laws] were explicit and successful attempts to change . . . individuals' moral beliefs by compelling them to change their behavior. . . ."

But what proof does Mr. Nuechterlein offer to support his claim that Will's argument is "mistaken in fact and dangerous in its implications," other than his own opinion that when Congress passed the civil-rights acts, "it surely did not see itself as arbiter of the 'moral beliefs' and 'inner lives' of Americans" because "it would have been trespassing on grounds from which it *should* be rigorously excluded"? (Emphasis added.)

That, apparently, is the extent of Mr. Nuechterlein's rejoinder. Nothing that follows indicates otherwise, except for Will's alleged discomfort with the implications of his position. Essentially, Mr. Nuechterlein rejects Will's thesis because he feels that government "should" be excluded from trespassing on individual citizens' moral beliefs and inner lives.

Mr. Nuechterlein's confidence in the libertarian sensibilities of contemporary American legislators is quaintly refreshing (particularly with respect to the U.S. Congress), but hardly, I submit, compatible with reality.

JOHN J. FINERTY, JR.
Washington, D.C.

JAMES NUECHTERLEIN writes:

There is much in William R. Hawkins's argument with which I have no quarrel. We do indeed need a government able to resist the importunate demands of lobbyists and special interests. But just how do we go about getting a government strong enough to do that? Or, to approach the problem from the other side, how do we persuade individuals and groups to stop making excessive demands on government in the first place?

If Mr. Hawkins has specific solutions to this problem, he does not offer them. He says simply that government must be "strengthened" so that it can act "as a defender of certain principles and the guardian of order" and that the American people must forsake materialistic individualism and learn restraint and a sense of community. This seems to me a restatement of the problem rather than a movement toward its solution. Mr. Hawkins has not shown us how government can acquire the strength he wants in order to accomplish the ends he seeks.

John J. Finerty, Jr. is wrong to think that I have confidence in the "libertarian sensibilities" of American legislators. I don't think they have any such sensibilities, nor, for that matter, do I think they should. That was not my point in taking issue with George Will's interpretation of the civil-rights legislation of the 1960's.

Will argues that a secondary intent of those laws was to "alter the operation of the minds" and to "improve the inner lives" of white Americans by compelling them "to eat and work and study and play" with black Americans. Now individual Congressmen may indeed

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have hoped that closer contact between blacks and whites would change the "moral beliefs" of racists and bigots. But surely the point of the legislation was to prevent whites from transforming harmful *beliefs* (which they have every right to hold) into *actions* that violate the legal rights of blacks. As I pointed out, the government has the right to stop me from violating my neighbor's rights, but it has no right to presume to use its coercive powers to regulate the operations of my mind or to improve my inner life. In the civil-rights laws, the government forbade certain behavior in order to secure the rights of blacks, not in order to make whites better people.

With Felix Frankfurter, and in opposition to George Will, I believe that "law is concerned with external behavior and not with the inner life of man." And I think the overwhelming majority of legislators side with Frankfurter, not Will. Over the years, the U.S. Congress has taken increasing power unto itself to regulate the behavior of American citizens, but I know of no evidence that it claims the right to control their minds.

The Sacred Executioner

To the Editor of Commentary:

Robert Alter, in his review of my book *The Sacred Executioner* [Books in Review, November 1983], criticizes my translation of the verb *pagash* in Exodus 4:24, but overlooks my note (p. 192), ". . . that this is the meaning here is only conjectural and is not strictly necessary for the argument." Mr. Alter, however, treats it as the main basis of the argument.

Mr. Alter generalizes that the quest for origins, whether by "a leap of the imagination . . . or by the patient analysis of shards and traces," has failed, and that we should give up "wondering about what came before the first things tradition has given us." Readers will decide for themselves the value of my own theories on the prehistoric background of the Bible, but it would be a pity if Mr. Alter's cautious advice were to inhibit bold theorizing on this or any other subject. It is only by bold theorizing or the "leap of imagination" that significant advances have been made in science. The new fundamentalism in biblical studies, by which aesthetic patternings are traced on the assumption of a seamless artistic unity at the stage of final redaction, can lead to some interesting low-key work (as in Mr. Alter's own studies); but the great and savage issues that have shaped man's religious destiny cannot be sidestepped quite so easily, and need a less sedate approach.

I would emphasize, however, that my main thesis—that the Jews are cast in the role of Sacred Executioner in the New Testament myth of redemption, performing the saving sacrifice and bearing the blood-guilt of its performance—does *not* depend on the rightness of my theory that there are fossilized or repressed remnants of similar sacrificial myths embedded in the Hebrew Bible; though, if I am right about this too, there is a compelling irony in the way the Jews were saddled with a mythic role which, through their whole religious development, they had struggled to banish from the religious scene.

Hyam Maccoby
Leo Baeck College
London, England

Robert Alter writes:

Hyam Maccoby is surely right that readers will decide for themselves on the merit of his theories, and since his letter does not attempt any reasoned defense of his position, I will not add to what I have already said about his methods and conclusions. More immediately, readers may draw certain inferences about a writer on historical matters who sees fit to characterize his own enterprise in such melodramatically self-promoting language ("bold theorizing" that confronts "the great and savage issues" avoided by more "sedate" approaches). And readers at all acquainted with the work I have done on the Bible will surely recognize in Mr. Maccoby's description of it as a "new fundamentalism" a crude polemical distortion.

Ingmar Bergman

To the Editor of Commentary:

After having seen most of Ingmar Bergman's film *oeuvre*, I found myself nodding in agreement with many of Richard Grenier's observations in "Bergman Discovers Love" [September 1983]. But there are some divergences. For one thing, Alf Sjöberg, the director of *Torment* (*Hets*), did not play the role of Isak Borg in *Wild Strawberries*. The great Victor Sjöström, the director of so many Swedish and Hollywood (as Victor Seastrom) silents, e.g., *The Phantom Carriage*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Wind*, played that part, and I believe it was Sjöström's last contribution to the cinema. Also, Gunnar Fischer continued as Bergman's cinematographer after *The Naked Night*; his last Bergman film was *The Devil's Eye* in 1960.

People might find this hard to believe, but judging from two viewings of *A Lesson in Love*, . . . I would say that Bergman has a very good comic sense. *A Lesson in Love* bears comparison very well with good American film comedies, and the pair of Gunnar Björnstrand and Eva Dahlbeck are worthy to be placed alongside Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy, maybe even Cary Grant. The Björnstrand-Dahlbeck magic also holds up in *Secrets of Women* (which was made first).

Still, Bergman has made some awful junk. Is there a greater director who has made swill like *All These Women* (probably the worst comedy I've ever endured), *The Hour of the Wolf*, and *The Serpent's Egg*? On the other hand, there's *The Magic Flute*, probably the best opera film ever made (although my experience of that genre is limited). . . .

I felt a slight sensation of anti-Semitism when I saw *Fanny and Alexander*. Why is this Jew Isak wearing a *yarmulke* and looking pious at Christmas dinner? I doubt if there were more than 5,000 Jews in all of Sweden in 1907. And Bergman conveniently picks one of them to be the focus of all kinds of goings-on. Plus the nephew Ismael! Give us a break. . . .

Murray Aronson
Hollywood, California

Musical New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

As principal harpist and pension trustee of the New York Philharmonic, I read with great interest Samuel Lipman's article, "Musical New York in Crisis" [October 1983]; Mr. Lipman writes on this subject with deep insight and empathy.

The musicians of the New York Philharmonic are frequently victims of one-sided barbs. We have no newspaper, radio station, or TV network at our disposal to defend ourselves from accusations, regardless of how false or unfounded they may be. Moreover, on at least one recent occasion, when a diatribe

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against our orchestra by Donal Henahan appeared in the New York *Times*, a reply I submitted as a letter to the editor was neither published in that newspaper nor even acknowledged.

What was amazing about Henahan's article, which appeared on September 11, 1983, prior to the opening of our season, was that, for lack of anything about which to criticize the Philharmonic musically, Henahan found sufficient creative resources to write an extensive, in-depth article based on three words—"most exciting orchestra"—which had appeared in a *Times* ad. After questioning our possession of "inner resources of stability and morale," he assured his readers that "Zubin Mehta, the music director, will find himself under even more pressure than usual, to keep the orchestra in a playing mood." The reason, he continued, is "Money, as usual."

Money seems to be more a preoccupation of Donal Henahan than it does of ourselves. Indeed, his articles on the New York Philharmonic have frequently placed a marked emphasis on matters financial rather than musical. Certainly, Henahan must know that alternative sources of income (such as TV, films, radio, extra concerts, etc.) are available to supplement our annual salaries, regardless of recording expectations. And he should know that, in any case, supplementary income could not ever be a determining factor in "keeping the orchestra in a playing mood."

In his September 11 piece Henahan also made frequent references to our "standing" in the orchestral world, rating us like a soap opera or a baseball team. I'm sure the untold number of listeners to our concerts, broadcasts, and recordings are little concerned how Henahan rates the New York Philharmonic. In a world where many superb ensembles exist and perform simultaneously, we do not compete with one another; our object is to play our very best at *all* times.

Henahan went on to say that "if the conductor is technically inept, inexperienced, or out of his depth, a great orchestra puts its head down and plays not only as well as he will allow, but better." Is it possible that he really believes that statement? If he does, and if it were true, this would present an excellent case for conductorless orchestras, and would tend to minimize the importance of the musicianship of the person at the helm.

This brings me to Henahan's September 15 review of the opening concert of our season, a concert which in my own opinion will be remembered as one of the musically memorable events of the past decade. Although the audience greeted the closing notes of the Mahler First Symphony with a thunderous ten-minute standing ovation, and although the orchestra enthusiastically joined in this standing ovation and refused to take a second bow in deference to the conductor, Rafael Kubelik, Henahan evidently did not share the feeling of magic in the evening's performance. After grudgingly conceding some laudatory remarks to Kubelik's musical interpretation (and to the "former" power of Rudolph Serkin, who appeared as soloist in Beethoven's Piano Concerto no. 1), he found nothing more to declare in his last sentence than some offhand remark about the orchestra having performed without too many problems.

I have been deeply puzzled, in rereading past articles of Henahan, by the apparent hostility frequently directed at the musicians of the New York Philharmonic. I have found myself wondering whether such articles serve a constructive, objective, and unbiased function in this sophisticated city of cultural munificence. And my wonder only increased when the *Times* chose simply to ignore the rebuttal of Henahan's views which I sent for publication.

The "crisis" of which Mr. Lipman writes is thus very deep indeed.

MYOR ROSEN

Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Musical New York in Crisis," Samuel Lipman implies that the strike by the New York City Opera orchestra would not have occurred if the musicians had respected the singers and productions more. Is there anyone naive enough to believe that? In an effort to make his arguments fit his point, he has resorted to claiming for the strikers a motivation which anyone with even a modicum of knowledge of human nature must find ludicrous. Is your readership expected to believe that workers equate the quality of goods produced with money in their pockets, or that this orchestra, led by "militant officers of Local 802," ever gave a moment's thought to "a company musicians can respect"? . . .

STEPHEN STRIMPELL

New York City

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

Myor Rosen has provided an eloquent answer to Stephen Strimpell's cynical and dismissive analysis of what makes the orchestra players of the New York City Opera tick. Clearly, my own position is very close to that of Mr. Rosen. The members of the City Opera orchestra, no less than the members of the New York Philharmonic, are musicians whose lives have been devoted to the accomplishment of an artistic task rather than to the maximization of economic gain. Almost all these players began their serious attachment to music in childhood; their adult activities seem more accurately described as callings than as jobs. To say this is hardly to ignore that on occasion they do band together to further their economic interests; it is, rather, to argue that as serious musicians they are willing to—and in fact every day actually do—make monetary sacrifices in order to continue playing great music. It is absurd to expect them to continue making these economic decisions without a compensating musical reward. That reward can only come through distinguished artistic leadership. Such leadership is now lacking on the New York scene, and its lack is the chief cause of the present musical crisis.

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Why an American Arms Build-up Is Morally Necessary

Patrick Glynn

THAT the Reagan administration has so far won most of the policy battles in the nuclear debate seems remarkable in light of the fact that it has lost virtually all the moral ones. Even as its defense programs have gradually gained approval in Congress, an enormous array of moral forces has mobilized against it. The press, the universities, even the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church—from nearly every institution vested with moral authority, powerful voices have been raised in opposition to the administration's plans.

The ethical debate over nuclear arms has compassed a broad range of themes, but at its heart the moral case against the administration rests on two charges. First, and most important, is the claim that under Ronald Reagan, American nuclear strategy has been moving from an essentially defensive posture to an essentially offensive one. It is this impression that has proved perhaps most dismaying to ordinary citizens. Occasionally the charge has shaded into the accusation that the administration actually "has come to plan," in the words of one anti-nuclear writer, "for waging and winning a nuclear war against the Soviet Union." On the whole, however, few people seriously suspect the President of harboring the wish to launch a premeditated attack. What is more generally thought is that through a combination of factors—fervent anti-Communism, militarism, folly, incompetence—the administration, left to its own devices, could conceivably blunder into a nuclear confrontation with the Soviets.

The second charge, closely related to the first, is that the administration's program will inevitably spark a new round of the arms race. The arms race is deplored on the grounds both that it is wasteful, diverting resources that could be applied to more humane programs, and that it is provocative, increasing the risk of nuclear war.

Against these charges the administration has mounted only the most ineffectual defense, failing again and again to dispel the impression that it is significantly more willing than its predecessors actually to risk nuclear war. Even its active attempts to engage the opposition have tended to turn to its own disadvantage. Indeed, so badly has the administration generally put its case that it has often appeared to gain more from silence than from its own maladroit efforts to persuade.

Yet in fairness to the administration, it must be acknowledged that the suspicions it has encountered do not spring solely from its policy formulations or even from its rhetorical ineptitude. The nuclear debate has been conducted in an atmosphere of deep distrust and mutual suspicion, and opposition to the administration's policies has come from two somewhat separate camps. The broad appeal of the anti-nuclear position has tended to obscure important differences between the moral perspectives of the two groups: while the grievances of one party might be said to find their root primarily in the "new" morality, the objections raised by the other party reach back to a much older moral consensus.

It is the first group that has formed the vanguard of the anti-nuclear campaign proper. Whatever concern nuclear weapons themselves may have provoked, the anti-nuclear movement has emerged partly as the product of a much broader sense of moral and political disillusionment. Critical to the movement's formation has been the experience of "demythologization" that touched so many lives in the 1960's and 1970's. For whole sectors of our culture, it should be recognized, moral thinking now finds its starting point in the *rejection* of received moral and political values. This loss of faith has had a profound effect on the perspective that many people bring to the problem of national defense. In particular, it has undermined in many minds the idea that the United States, at least as a political entity, is something basically good and worth preserving. Thus while protest is inevitably directed against the weapons, for many people it is the United States government that is the real object of distrust. At its roots, the contention of these people is not that the administration has a bad defense policy, but that in the end the United States,

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or at least the United States government, is hardly worth defending.

The strength of this view should not be underestimated, for among the young and educated it enjoys extremely wide, if usually tacit, acceptance. Moreover, it has entered respectable discourse. Traces of this outlook can even be found in the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on war and peace. "To pretend that as a nation we have lived up to our ideals," write the bishops, "would be patently dishonest." Such moral judgments, whether warranted or not, cannot help but influence our thinking on the subject of our own self-preservation. It would be no exaggeration to say that our sense of guilt has in recent years tended to prejudice us *against* the cause of our own political survival.

STILL, the most serious and powerful moral criticism of the Reagan administration's policies has come from people who believe strongly in our right to survive but who contend that the administration's policies far exceed any merely defensive requirement. The moral thinking behind this assertion is by no means new. The general conviction that Western nuclear strategy ought to remain defensive flows from a long-standing moral and strategic consensus, grounded in the doctrine of "containment" and forged in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis. This consensus has influenced both public feeling and government policy concerning nuclear weapons for upward of twenty years. The most prestigious public figures who have risen in recent months to oppose the administration—including a number of famous men from the Kennedy administration—have done so largely in defense of this older outlook.

The convictions that constitute this older consensus are now very familiar: that nuclear war, once begun, will unleash a catastrophe of unimaginable dimensions, resulting, effectively, in the end of the world; that consequently nuclear weapons can have no conceivable military use; that we already possess many more times the weapons that we need utterly to annihilate the Soviet Union and even to obliterate the world as a whole. To most Americans these propositions have become nothing less than axiomatic. Indeed, so basic are these ideas to public understanding of nuclear weapons that their origins in actual strategic theories about nuclear war are now generally forgotten. It is widely assumed that they spring from the simplest common sense. But in fact the reigning public consensus on nuclear policy has its roots in a very specific theory of nuclear strategy, first articulated by the Defense Department under Robert S. McNamara in the early 1960's: the doctrine known as "assured destruction" or (as it eventually became) "mutual assured destruction" (MAD). The public moral consensus on nuclear armaments is in large measure a somewhat simplified version of "mutual assured destruction."

The outlines of this strategy are by now well-known. In its original formulation, the theory of assured destruction stipulated that a deliberate nuclear attack on the United States could be deterred so long as the U.S. maintained the clear ability to inflict upon the attacker an "unacceptable" retaliatory blow. Deterrence depended, in the words of two of McNamara's civilian strategists, on "maintaining at all times a clear and unmistakable ability to inflict an unacceptable degree of damage upon any aggressor, or combination of aggressors—even after absorbing a surprise first strike." "Stability" in the conflict between the nuclear superpowers would thus spring from the reciprocal vulnerability of their two societies—meaning chiefly their cities—to devastating nuclear attack.

From these simple premises followed a number of important consequences. First, the attainment by the Soviet Union of a similar assured-destruction capability was to be encouraged rather than opposed, since "deterrence" to be "stable" must be "mutual." Second, the United States would gain nothing from the attempt to acquire "superiority" in nuclear weapons, both because any effort to gain an advantage would be countered by the Soviet Union and because in the presence of assured destruction no real advantage can exist. Finally, defensive weapons such as an anti-ballistic-missile system—especially when designed to protect civilian populations—were not to be sought but rather shunned as dangerous, for by threatening to rob one's adversary of an assured-destruction capability they would "destabilize" the nuclear "balance."

From the standpoint of traditional military reasoning, these propositions have always appeared highly paradoxical, which may explain in part why over the years MAD has failed to find much support among the professional military. As Lawrence Freedman notes, it is among civilian strategists in the West that the doctrine of assured destruction has found its strongest adherents. Yet the challenge that MAD posed from the beginning to traditional military thought was made credible by the radically novel nature of the weapons at issue. Writing of nuclear weapons in 1959, Bernard Brodie expressed an idea that has since become commonplace: "The basic fact is that the soldier has been handed a problem that extends far beyond the expertise of his own profession."

Moreover, whatever doubts may have been raised concerning its military validity, particularly in the past few years, MAD has persisted as a vision of imposing moral authority. This authority derives chiefly from two considerations: the inherent defensiveness of the doctrine, and its compatibility with the process of arms control. The strongest military argument against MAD—that it offers no guidance, in Benjamin Lambeth's phrase, "at the edge of war," that it is not in any operational sense a "strategy"—has tended to be the strongest moral argument in its favor. Precisely because it would be useless in war, the doctrine of assured destruc-

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tion has seemed to many to strengthen the cause of peace. Even more important, MAD establishes a theoretical upper limit to forces necessary for deterrence and in doing so provides the strategic logic that permits arms control. It allows us to stop building even if the Soviets continue—so long, it would seem, as our assured-destruction capability is indeed assured. MAD is valued in great measure because it seems to leave open a path to disarmament.

Nonetheless, it is fair to say that the doctrine of assured destruction has exerted a more enduring hold on public thinking concerning nuclear war than on government policy. Even in the mid-1960's, when assured destruction was the official declaratory policy of the U.S. government, actual military-targeting priorities remained at odds with MAD. Declaratory policy emphasized that nuclear weapons would be used to make punishing strikes against enemy civilian centers; but the Air Force continued to give priority in its targeting to military sites.

From the mid-1970's onward, moreover, U.S. policy began gradually to move away from MAD. Contrary to the common conception, the Reagan administration is by no means the first to frame its defense policy on premises at odds with assured-destruction thinking. In 1974, in response both to changes in missile technology and to new testing and deployments by the Soviet Union, the Defense Department under Defense Secretary James Schlesinger moved away from an assured-destruction posture toward a policy of "flexible response," or "flexible targeting." At issue were two concerns: first, Schlesinger claimed that the threat that any Soviet attack, however limited, would be met with retaliation on a massive scale was losing credibility and no longer provided an adequate foundation for deterrence; second, he argued, it was necessary to envision in more detail what might actually occur in the event of Soviet nuclear aggression. Assured destruction offered no guidance in the event that deterrence "failed."

The so-called "Schlesinger Doctrine" emphasized the need to develop "sufficient options" between the "massive response" of assured destruction and "doing nothing." The goal was to limit escalation in the event of nuclear conflict by preparing to "hit meaningful [i.e., military] targets with a sufficient accuracy-yield combination to destroy only the intended target and to avoid widespread collateral damage." This strategic evolution was continued under the Carter administration with the issuance of Presidential Directive 59 (PD-59) under Defense Secretary Harold Brown, which sought to extend the emphasis on military targets and on increasing possible options for responses in the event of nuclear attack. Both the Schlesinger Doctrine and PD-59 were attacked as departures from assured destruction; the latter policy statement aroused particularly vociferous opposition. In this sense, the current debate is merely a continuation of a dispute that originated in the mid-1970's.

But while the basic issues of the debate have not altered, its shape has been critically affected by the emergence of the popular anti-nuclear campaign. A kind of fissure has opened between the moral and strategic issues in the conflict, with one side in the debate (the administration) resorting instinctively to strategic arguments, while the other side (the peace movement) resorts habitually to moral ones. In the process, the complicated relation between these two kinds of issues has been obscured.

The chief beneficiaries of this development have been the advocates of MAD, for the view of nuclear deterrence based on assured destruction has come to be understood by many as, in effect, the middle position of the conflict. There is irony in this development, since for most of the 1970's MAD was not the center but rather one side in the controversy over nuclear policy. Yet in comparison with the more extreme anti-nuclear activists, with their unilateralist sympathies, their suspicions of the United States, and their ambitious dreams of a utopian future, the adherents of MAD, once seen as the "doves" in the debate, have tended to appear more and more as hardened realists. After all, next to outright nuclear pacifism, any form of belief in deterrence tends to appear tough-minded. Thus over the past year numerous articles have appeared "in defense of deterrence"—by which is usually meant a view of deterrence based on MAD. It is this outlook that to many seems to combine best the moral concerns raised by the peace movement and the strategic concerns articulated by the administration. One writer expressing this view has tersely divided the debate into three camps: a "party of peace" (the anti-nuclear movement), a "party of war" (the administration), and, in the center, a "party of deterrence" (the advocates of MAD).

Thus in the name of MAD the specter of unilateral disarmament has been vanquished again and again, but in the process the deeper relation between the moral and strategic issues has tended to be lost to view. The relation between these two concerns is not merely additive; a strategy that existed merely as an ill-conceived compromise between our strategic necessities and our moral ideals would hardly provide an adequate foundation for our defense. Moreover, what would be true of any other strategic doctrine is also true of MAD: its moral value depends entirely on its prior claim to practical, strategic validity. It may well be desirable to prevent the unstinted growth of nuclear arsenals and to avoid the costs and risks entailed by a U.S. military build-up. It may well be desirable to leave open a clear path to disarmament. But it is moral to attempt this *only if it can be safely done*—that is, only if by taking this course we do not embrace the greater risk of weakening

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deterrence to the point where a nuclear war becomes more likely as the result of our well-meaning efforts.

Whether MAD offers intrinsically a more or less moral outlook on the nuclear problem, then, depends on whether it is strategically valid; for any moral claim the doctrine may have rests in the first place on the assumption that it will work. To answer the moral questions raised by the conflict between assured destruction and its alternatives, it is therefore necessary to grasp with some precision the strategic realities at issue.

CRITICAL, above all, is the significance of the imposing military build-up undertaken by the Soviet Union over the past decade. That the Soviets have added massively to their military strength in the last ten years hardly any knowledgeable person will dispute. Indeed, the administration's strongest moral and strategic argument on its own behalf has been that its actions constitute nothing more than a necessary response to measures taken by the Soviet Union. Yet the force of this argument has been constantly undermined by the repeated denial on the part of prestigious figures in public debate that the Soviet build-up poses any real threat to the security of the United States—or at least a threat strong enough to merit the administration's response.

What is not widely understood is that this denial is based not on any factual dispute with the administration, but rather on a certain conceptual understanding of nuclear strategy: on the MAD hypothesis. Thus the whole moral argument hinges critically on this fundamental strategic assumption, and it is simply impossible to make an informed moral judgment on the debate until its merits and demerits are sorted out.

At the heart of MAD, in its initial formulation, was a promise of convergence—in technology, in strategic doctrine, in military behavior—between the two superpowers. It is this convergence that opponents of MAD, including members of the Reagan administration, argue has entirely failed to come to pass. As envisioned by the framers of the doctrine, the rationale for convergence lay in the unprecedented nature of nuclear weapons. The weapons had only to exist, it was felt, for new laws of strategy to obtain—the laws of assured destruction. In the nuclear age, strategy and politics would be shaped ultimately by imperatives embodied in the technology. As one group of analysts wrote in the mid-1960's: "Technology seems to have a leveling effect which subsumes political, ideological, and social differences in various political systems." Whether or not the rather radical changes these analysts predicted would come about, it was felt generally that nuclear weapons forced certain necessary choices on the leaders of countries that possessed them.

One of the critical difficulties that proponents of MAD confronted from the beginning was the overwhelming evidence that Soviet strategists had no such view of nuclear technology; on the contrary, the Soviets seemed to assume even a central nuclear war to be "winnable." This is not to be confused, as it occasionally has been, with the implausible claim that Soviet leaders or military men approach the prospect of nuclear war in a spirit of light-heartedness. The Soviets presumably recognize as well as anybody else the horrors that nuclear war would entail. But this has not prevented Soviet strategists from persisting in the conviction that in practice there would be a difference between "winners" and "losers" in such a war, and that this outcome would not necessarily be random but could be affected by the weapons, the defensive preparations, and the strategies of the two sides.

While public statements of Soviet leaders were gradually adjusted to take account of Western thinking on nuclear war, behind this façade of apparent agreement, Soviet military thinking remained extremely hostile to the prevailing Western notion that nuclear war would mean "the end of the world." "There is profound error and harm," in the words of the Soviet strategist General Major A. S. Milovidov, "in the disorienting claim of bourgeois ideologues that there could be no victor in a thermonuclear world war. The peoples of the world will put an end to imperialism, which is causing mankind incalculable suffering." Whereas in the West the emergence of nuclear weapons led to the radical break with traditional military thinking defined by MAD, in the Soviet Union nuclear weapons were assimilated to the traditional military understanding of operations in war: the ordering concept was, and still is, that of "victory."

As a result, Soviet strategy has retained two emphases that for some time dropped out of Western military doctrine and certainly from public understanding concerning nuclear war: the primacy of military (as opposed to civilian) targets, and the utility of civil defense. Thus even when discussing massive nuclear salvos, Soviet strategists envision the strikes aimed not at civilians but at military and economic facilities. Civil defense is also seen to play an important role, as explained in this passage from a 1970 article in a Soviet military journal: "Obviously there will be a mass evacuation of the population from densely populated cities, major industrial and administrative centers." Some preparations would be made in peacetime (for example, the Soviets currently possess hardened shelters to accommodate 100,000 key party and military personnel), but the most significant efforts would become visible during the period when, as Soviet strategy puts it, events indicate that "war is coming."

The fact that Soviet strategic thinking diverged from that of the West was apparent even at the time that assured destruction was formulated, but it was not understood to present an insurmountable difficulty. For one thing, as Lawrence Freedman notes, Soviet doctrine had undergone some

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interesting revisions in the 1950's when it was altered to accommodate the existence of nuclear weapons and missiles. It was assumed that it could change again, and more radically. For another, the Soviets lacked anything approaching the military capability to bring about what their strategy proposed. It is important to recognize that McNamara explicitly conceived the formulation of MAD partly as an educative effort to wean the Soviets away from what were understood to be "primitive" and tradition-bound military notions. The early posture statements setting forth assured destruction were written with great care, partly with the intent of instructing the Soviets, and McNamara expressed satisfaction at the number of statements purchased by the Soviet embassy in Washington.

This idea of "educating" the Soviet high command has remained a remarkably persistent theme among adherents of mutual assured destruction. As late as 1977, for example, Paul Warnke, head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, referred in an interview to the "primitive" Soviet concept of victory: "Instead of talking in those terms, which would indulge what I regard as the primitive aspects of Soviet nuclear doctrine, we ought to be trying to educate them into the real world of strategic nuclear weapons, which is that nobody could possibly win."

To judge from Warnke's comment, Soviet leaders have proved to be pupils of more than average recalcitrance, since it would seem that in 1977 the U.S. was still "trying to educate them" regarding ideas that had been first explained to them almost fifteen years before. Still, in gauging the success of this effort of education, both sides in the American debate have tended to agree that progress should be measured more by deeds than by words. Whatever the Soviets may say about "victory" in nuclear war, it is their actions that count. But even here controversy arises, for while there is broad agreement concerning the facts of the case, there is great variance in their interpretation. Readings of Soviet behavior seem to be materially affected by whether one accepts or rejects the premises of MAD.

Proponents and opponents of MAD tend to diverge markedly in their interpretations of even specific Soviet actions. Take, for example, the anti-ballistic-missile (ABM) portion of the 1972 SALT I agreement. The ABM treaty has frequently been praised as the most successful single arms-control agreement concluded to date, since the treaty actually prevented the deployment of a wholly new weapons system that would potentially have transformed the strategic balance. The treaty has also been cited as concrete evidence of implicit Soviet acquiescence in at least the essential elements of MAD. Prohibitions on defensive measures seemed to run counter to the strong bias in Soviet military thinking toward the utility of measures designed to defend both military installations and economic centers. Soviet willingness to accept such provisions therefore was understood as a significant adjustment to the "realities" of the nuclear age. As Jerome H. Kahan put it in a 1975 article: "That the USSR has now accepted the inevitability, if not the desirability, of a mutual deterrence relationship with the United States is suggested strongly by Moscow's preference for stringent limits on area ABM deployments in the SALT treaty." Kahan acknowledged that Soviet doctrine had not shifted away from its explicit "war-fighting" orientation. Nonetheless, he insisted on the basis of the ABM treaty that Soviet doctrine was "somewhat comparable to ours."

Yet there was an alternative explanation for Soviet behavior regarding the ABM treaty that successive events have rendered ever more persuasive. It is that, far from acquiescing in some new technological imperative of the nuclear age, or accepting MAD, the Soviets in negotiating limits on ABM systems were simply seeking unilateral military advantage in a very traditional sense. Notably, the Soviets actively pursued the development of defensive technologies throughout the 1960's. These efforts resulted in the creation of the so-called "Galosh" ABM system that is deployed to this day to protect Moscow and in fact much of the Western Soviet Union. As Seymour Weiss has noted in the *Wall Street Journal*: "Euphemistically described as the Moscow system, the Soviet ABM defense provides protection to a substantial portion of the Western USSR, containing about 75 percent of Soviet population and industry and a substantial portion of Soviet military capabilities." (Under the treaty, each side was permitted two area systems, reduced to one in the July 1974 protocol; our response has been to dismantle our last remaining ABM sites.) During the 1960's the Soviets spurned all suggestions by the U.S. that such defensive deployments be limited by treaty. It was only when Richard Nixon had secured Senate approval for the technologically superior U.S. "Safeguard" ABM system that the Soviets became eager to discuss ABM limitations. In Henry Kissinger's account in *Years of Upheaval*:

> In 1967, before we had an ABM program, President Lyndon Johnson had suggested to Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin at Glassboro that both sides renounce ABM's. Kosygin contemptuously dismissed the idea as one of the most ridiculous he had ever heard. By 1970, after the Nixon administration had won its congressional battle for ABM by one vote, Soviet SALT negotiators refused to discuss any other subject. Only by the most strenuous negotiating effort did we insure that limits on offensive, as well as defensive, weapons were included.

In short, once the full political context of Soviet actions is considered, the ABM provisions and even the SALT I agreement as a whole take on a new aspect. What one sees is not, as has been portrayed, the involuntary Soviet acquiescence in MAD but

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rather the effort of a traditional great power to secure by negotiation the military advantage that it could not attain by its own technology. In the United States, where the chief preoccupation in the strategic debate has tended to be the validity or invalidity of mutual assured destruction, the American Safeguard ABM system was seen chiefly as a threat to the logic of MAD. In the Soviet Union, one suspects, the U.S. ABM system was seen as a threat to the USSR. The problem with the American Safeguard system, from the Soviet point of view, was not that it threatened to invalidate MAD, which the Soviets had never accepted in the first place, but that it threatened to neutralize the military and political value of Soviet rocket forces as a threat to the West. If this characterization seems harsh, it ought to be kept in mind that Soviet behavior in this regard would be consistent with the behavior of most powerful states through most of history. It is America that, in its preoccupation with the MAD hypothesis, turns out to be the odd bird.

Subsequent Soviet actions have tended to confirm this interpretation of the ABM episode. The effect of SALT I in the United States was to extinguish political interest in ballistic-missile defense; consequently, funding for ABM research in the United States dropped precipitously. In the Soviet Union, by contrast, such research has continued apace. The Galosh system was modernized, and new phased-array radars of the sort used by ABM systems, and covered by the treaty, have been deployed in six sites. In recent months, testing and deployment have even skirted violations of the treaty. SAM-10 and SAM-12 anti-aircraft missiles have reportedly been tested in an ABM mode; and the recent detection of a new phased-array radar installation, deployed near a Siberian ballistic-missile field in an area prohibited by the treaty, has prompted a debate within the Reagan administration concerning the wisdom—political and otherwise—of raising the issue of Soviet treaty violations.*

Whether the administration will press its case is not clear at this writing. In this connection, however, the presence or absence of violations is less important than the abundant confirmation that the Soviet Union is committed to a view of defensive measures totally at odds with MAD. The main evidence for tacit Soviet acceptance of mutual assured destruction would appear to have been misinterpreted.

IT MAY be an overstatement to describe as "epistemological" the differences that result in such divergent interpretations of Soviet actions, but radical contrasts in perception are clearly at issue. Critical is the role assigned to politics. Opponents of MAD have tended to dwell more than their counterparts on the specific political character of the Soviet regime. MAD, by contrast, reflecting its intellectual origins, offers a fundamentally nonpolitical account of the conflict between the superpowers. Rooted in economic "game theory," MAD arrives at its analysis by viewing strategic adversaries simply as rational actors abstractly understood. Presumably the logic of MAD would apply equally well to any two states that found themselves in the circumstances of the United States and the Soviet Union—i.e., to any two politically opposed states in possession of nuclear weapons. While accepting political conflict as a kind of axiom or condition, MAD abstracts from the content of the political struggle, dwelling instead on the dimensions in which the outlook and circumstances of the U.S. and the USSR are rendered by virtue of nuclear technology "comparable."

Grand strategies, it has been observed, tend to reflect the character of the regimes which devise them, and from the outset there has been a close kinship between "assured destruction" and the nature of the American polity. MAD stands as a kind of partial reflection of the American ethos. In America, as in the MAD vision, technology is understood to be the decisive shaper of life, the modern fact *par excellence*, the ultimate supplier and limiter of human options. But even more important, the MAD doctrine is, like so much of American political thinking, essentially apolitical in orientation. In MAD, as in American life generally, politics is treated as a sort of afterthought, an epiphenomenon of a broader "human" experience. The actors in MAD are essentially unaffected by ideology or values: whatever their beliefs or other goals, they respond predictably, almost automatically, to the imperatives embodied in the technology. In this portrait of strategic actors there is something of America's genial, ethnocentric self—a confident projection of *homo economicus*: the assumption that, once the deal is spelled out, everybody is bound to agree on the basics with everybody else, to evaluate the costs and the benefits in the same way. In the context of American culture, the primacy that MAD assigns to technological influences and essentially economic calculations of advantage hardly seems surprising.†

There is now good reason to wish that in the nuclear era Americans had possessed more of what the poet John Keats called "negative capability"—the ability, simply speaking, to put oneself in another's shoes. Despite mountains of evidence to the contrary, the overwhelmingly prevalent assumption has been that, at least in the essential respects, Soviet views of nuclear strategy were "somewhat comparable" to ours. To most Americans, and even to many American "experts," it has been in-

* This point is discussed in Robert Jastrow's article, "Reagan vs. the Scientists: Why the President Is Right about Missile Defense," which appeared in last month's COMMENTARY.

† For a fuller description of the apolitical character of assured-destruction thinking, see Wendell John Coats, Jr., "The Ideology of Arms Control," *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 5, no. 3, Summer 1982.

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conceivable that the Soviets might approach nuclear weapons with different goals, different priorities, a different understanding of how the weapons might be used and what they could be used for. Nothing the Soviets themselves might say seemed capable of shaking this hypothesis.

Yet if the comfortable assumption of Soviet "comparability" has persisted for a long time, that is partly because for most of the nuclear era it has been, in the literal sense of the word, a "safe" assumption. This is to say, during much of the postwar period, Soviet military capabilities—especially nuclear—were so inferior to those of the United States that it hardly mattered what the Soviets thought about strategy at any level.

There is an irony in the history of MAD, for this doctrine of "mutual" vulnerability was formulated at a time when vulnerability was anything but mutual. As late as 1966, it should be remembered, the Soviets possessed only 350 land-based and only about 30 submarine-launched ballistic missiles as compared with an American total in the two categories of over 1,700. Yet our doctrine was predicated on "parity." By a trick of memory, it now tends to be assumed that it was "parity" of weapons that insured our safety in the past. It was nothing of the sort. At the time of the Cuban missile crisis, the United States possessed overwhelming superiority in both conventional naval and nuclear armaments. Those present at the crisis have since argued that it was not nuclear strength but in fact conventional force locally applied—in particular, the naval quarantine of Cuba—that brought a successful resolution of the crisis. But as Peter W. Rodman has shown in these pages, this is not at all self-evident ("The Missiles of October: Twenty Years Later," October 1982). The fact is that the Soviet Union was aware of U.S. strength at all levels, and it is difficult to argue that nuclear superiority did not play a role. At all events, it was overall *strategic* superiority that gave the United States scope to act—and it is crucial to recognize that this strategic superiority, whether in nuclear or conventional arms, is now a thing of the past.

THE whole dispute over the validity of MAD and the nature of Soviet intentions might have remained what it originally was—chiefly a theoretical argument—were it not for certain troubling developments. Yet changes in both technology and in military deployments have forced these issues once again to the fore. Notably, technology has moved in a direction exactly opposite to that predicted by early proponents of MAD. Rather than forcing a convergence of doctrine and strategy upon the superpowers, it has helped to pull them, strategically speaking, farther and farther apart. The crucial factor has been the emergence of highly accurate nuclear warheads capable of destroying hardened military targets and even hardened missile silos. These so-called "counterforce" weapons endow "war-fighting" strategies of nuclear war—like those articulated in Soviet military writing—with a physical plausibility that they never previously had. Thus technology has introduced into the military arsenals of the superpowers a physical distinction corresponding to the strategic distinction between war-fighting and assured-destruction doctrines. MAD envisions a punitive strike at the *society* of the enemy; counterforce weapons make it at least physically possible to destroy missiles in their silos and thus to strike at the enemy's *weapons*, the adversary's physical ability to wage nuclear war.

Yet even these technological developments might have been weathered by MAD had the Soviet Union not moved so decisively to take advantage of them. It is critical to recognize that the Soviet Union responded to the emergence of counterforce technology in a manner fundamentally different from that of the United States, though in a fashion totally consistent with its own understanding of the function of nuclear arms. At this point in the nuclear era—if not before—there was a clear divergence in the behavior of the two superpowers. Throughout the 1970's the Soviet Union moved unstintingly to develop and deploy as large a number of counterforce warheads as was practical. Faced at the same moment with the possibility of developing such counterforce capability, the United States deliberately decided to forgo its option, in the interest of preserving the relationship of mutual deterrence.

From 1969 to 1974 the United States exercised deliberate restraint in the development of warhead accuracy so as not to threaten Soviet assured-destruction capability. Thomas Wolfe summarized the U.S. action in a well-known study for the Rand Corporation, *The SALT Experience*:

> From 1969 to 1979, it was U.S. declaratory policy, backed up by budgetary controls, not to develop highly accurate weapons that might threaten hardened Soviet military targets. This policy was not universally applauded on the U.S. side, as indicated by news accounts in August 1972 of Pentagon plans to accelerate the development of more accurate warheads but not to deploy them. Congress, however, rejected appropriations associated with these programs, illustrating continued congressional adherence to constraints upon improvement of U.S. counterforce capabilities. It was only during [James] Schlesinger's tenure as Secretary of Defense that the declaratory policy against accuracy improvements was formally stopped with congressional approval.

In a pattern that was to be repeated again and again during the course of the decade, the Soviets failed to reciprocate the United States' gesture of unilateral restraint—its "self-denying ordinance."

That Soviet leaders would move in such a direction is hardly surprising in light of Soviet strategic thinking; at the same time, the deployment of counterforce weapons on a massive scale gave new

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credibility to the Soviet strategic formulations that had been long dismissed in the West as absurd.

THANKS to massive Soviet deployments of counterforce weapons, it began to become apparent in the middle of the last decade that by the early 1980's the Soviet Union would have deployed a sufficient number of counterforce warheads to destroy 90 to 95 percent of U.S. land-based missiles in their silos, using only a small portion of its own intercontinental-ballistic-missile (ICBM) force. Since the U.S. submarine-based missiles that would remain intact do not currently possess counterforce capability, it seemed that the President might be left with the sole option of retaliating against such an attack with a "countervalue" strike against Soviet society, only to face far worse countervalue retribution in return.

Thus the Soviet build-up was operating to deprive us gradually of a credible retaliatory capacity. That we would have survivable missiles was not in doubt, but since the Soviets would possess an equal number and since the missiles could only be targeted effectively at civilian centers, there would be no possibility of U.S. retaliation short of mutual suicide. Even the Soviet first strike could produce casualties in the millions; but if retaliation meant 100 million more Americans dead, it was felt that the President's hand would likely be stayed.

The plausibility of this scenario was widely criticized. But what is important to recognize is that ten years earlier, even the hint that the Soviets might be allowed to achieve such an advantage would have been greeted with an outpouring of public concern. At the same time it should be stressed that the controversy over the so-called "window of vulnerability" has to do with the likelihood that the Soviets would launch such an attack. Among knowledgeable people the technical reality of U.S. ICBM vulnerability is no longer a matter for dispute. It has been confirmed not only by the Defense Department but by the bipartisan report of the Scowcroft commission:

> While Soviet operational missile performance in wartime may be somewhat less accurate than performance on the test range, the Soviets nevertheless now probably possess the necessary combinations of ICBM numbers, reliability, accuracy, and warhead yield to destroy almost all of the 1,047 U.S. ICBM silos using only a portion of their own ICBM force. The U.S. ICBM force now deployed cannot inflict similar damage, even using the entire force.

This passage is especially interesting in light of the popular conception that in the Scowcroft report the idea of a "window of vulnerability" was dismissed. It needs to be noted that the United States does not possess a comparable capacity vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Because of the smaller size and lesser accuracy of U.S. warheads, it is estimated at present that even a full-scale preemptive American attack against the Soviet rocket force would leave about 65 percent of Soviet ICBM's intact.

It is important to recognize that the military and political significance of the Soviet Union's newly acquired preemptive capability does not rest on any foolish or simple-minded assumption that the Soviet leadership is somehow eager to make actual use of it. It has become customary in the nuclear debate to point out that the idea of a Soviet preemptive strike is preposterous and to assume that with this single stroke the argument is done. What is critical to grasp is that the missiles do not have to be fired to be of significant military and political weight.

To the degree that relations between opposing states remain peaceful, they are based on the calculation, rather than the actual employment, of military power, and it is this calculation that the growth of Soviet strength decisively upsets. Throughout the postwar period the security of the democracies has depended fundamentally on the U.S. "nuclear umbrella"; that is, the freedom of the West has been predicated on American strategic superiority, and American superiority has depended in turn on superiority in nuclear arms. (There is reason to lament the degree to which the West has neglected conventional military strength in favor of less expensive nuclear deployments, but that is a topic for another time and place.) To say that the American nuclear advantage has been cancelled by recent Soviet deployments understates the case. What people are pleased to call "parity," on the basis of a definition artfully grown vaguer and vaguer over the years and months, is, from the standpoint of any operational military calculation, Soviet superiority—growing clearer and clearer almost by the day. To the degree that these calculations describe physical possibilities that could be made to come about, they cannot be dismissed. It is not necessary to assume that the Soviets want to wage nuclear war; indeed, hardly anyone in or out of the Reagan administration makes this assumption. It is only necessary to assume that the Soviets wish to banish from *our* minds any hope that if they chose to initiate such a struggle, we would have a chance to survive.

What tends to be forgotten, moreover, is that the whole controversy over Soviet nuclear "parity" takes place in a strategic climate of overwhelming Soviet superiority in conventional forces. Numerically the Soviet Union far outdistances the West in nearly every category of conventional weaponry, and in many areas the technological gap that once worked to the advantage of Western forces has virtually closed. Even if the Soviets were to succeed in shifting the strategic conflict entirely to the conventional level, they would gain an enormous advantage.

For a long time it was possible to explain the Soviet build-up as an effort to gain "parity." And yet it is now obvious that the Soviet Union attained rough parity in nuclear armaments at least a dec-

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ade ago and attained an assured-destruction capability some time before that. (The 1972 SALT I agreement, it should be remembered, allowed the Soviet Union a quantitative advantage of 800 intercontinental missiles, to compensate for what was understood to be American technological superiority and for the existence of 162 nuclear missiles in the British and French arsensals.)

Even now, the Soviets continue to construct powerful, counterforce-capable ICBM's at the rate of nearly 200 a year. In the past decade, the Soviet Union has built a total of 2,000 ICBM's. (For comparison, it should be noted that the U.S. built 350 ICBM's during the same period; and even the controversial Scowcroft proposal concerning the MX envisions the construction of only 100 of these missiles.) In addition, 350 new, extremely accurate intermediate-range missiles have been deployed by the Soviets against Europe and Asia in the past six years.

Even in areas where the Soviet advantage is absurdly overpowering, construction continues at a fantastic rate. Warsaw Pact forces now enjoy roughly a 5-to-1 advantage over NATO forces in tank power, yet in 1981, for example, the USSR and Warsaw Pact countries built a total of 5,040 new battle tanks, as compared with a NATO and U.S. total for the same year of 760. From 1969 to 1975, U.S. defense spending actually declined in real terms, while Soviet spending grew at roughly a 4-percent real rate. For much of the later 70's, the Soviet Union was outspending the United States by as much as 50 percent, on a much poorer economic base. To this day, in the wake of Ronald Reagan's "massive build-up," Soviet military spending substantially exceeds that of the U.S.*

In a democratic nation alive to the requirements of its own survival, such a series of dark developments might be expected to arouse a sense of emergency and call forth a new consensus. Nothing of the sort has occurred. The absence of a sense of crisis, moreover, is self-reinforcing; for if, as the public mood suggests, there is no real emergency, then why worry?

It is not MAD alone, of course, that has prevented acknowledgment of these new developments. Most of the really obvious changes have occurred in the past ten and many in the past five years—precisely the period during which American public opinion was occupied with the denouement of Vietnam and the crisis of Watergate. But critical in annulling any sense of emergency has been the vocal denial of extremely prestigious public figures —nearly all of them long-time partisans of MAD— that any real danger exists.

What is not widely understood, however, is that this denial is not *factual* but *conceptual* in character. No responsible opponent of the current administration denies the veracity of its reports concerning the Soviet military build-up; *what is denied is that it matters.* The basis for this denial lies in the MAD hypothesis: if the U.S. continues to possess an assured-destruction capability—and submarine warheads alone would seem to constitute such a force—then no Soviet actions, under the logic of MAD, could fundamentally threaten our security. However, this conceptual denial of the importance of recent developments has tended to become confused in the public mind with a factual denial of their existence, just as opposition to the theory of MAD has sometimes been confused with the disposition to risk, "hawkishly," embarking on a nuclear war.

Yet it is worth asking whether the MAD hypothesis has not survived over the years simply by turning increasingly circular, tautological. In retrospect, the history of assured-destruction thinking since its original conceptualization appears more and more a history of denial and rhetorical retreat: denial, first, of the importance of Soviet strategic thinking; denial, next, of the military utility of ABM; denial of the unceasing Soviet build-up, both in its early stages and even now when the supposed goal of "parity" has long since been surpassed; denial even of the military and political significance of a Soviet first-strike capability.

At the same time, there has been a steady tactical retreat from confident assertions that the Soviets could be made to think and act toward nuclear weapons the way we do, to the qualified claim that it didn't matter what they thought so long as they acted properly (the ABM treaty), to the current rather implausible avowals that nothing they think or do could ever make a difference.

Thus, after all the revelations of Soviet strategic thinking, after all the reversals in American hopes for arms control, after all the discredited predictions that the Soviets would stop building once they achieved assured destruction or "parity," such a man as McGeorge Bundy can still write, without humor, that "on the nature of nuclear danger serious Soviet leaders and experts have repeatedly shown an understanding not essentially different from that which moved the [American Catholic] bishops." In Bundy's new formulation, mutual assured destruction has been transformed into something called "existential deterrence"—merely the latest name for the twenty-year-old idea of MAD.

In short, events and realities that to less committed observers might seem to have clear and definite implications for our strategic circumstances have successively been gainsaid or explained away in the service of the single hypothesis that assured destruction is enough. "The more of doubt," says one of Robert Browning's characters, "the stronger faith, I say/If faith o'ercomes doubt." Against a cascade of doubts, MAD has proved a marvelously resilient creed.

* Even the latest revised CIA estimates, according to published reports, state that Soviet military spending exceeded that of the U.S. by 25 percent in 1981.

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Yet so preponderant has become the need to discount or explain away Soviet departures from MAD that the logic of deterrence is no longer applied in public debate with any consistency. MAD depends on what Glenn Snyder has termed "deterrence by pain"—as opposed to "deterrence by denial." MAD strategists argue, in essence, that given the horrendous power of nuclear arms, the threat of pain—i.e., the threat of retaliation against an enemy society—should be sufficient to deter attack. War-fighting or counterforce strategies, by contrast, emphasize the importance of "denying" the enemy the military wherewithal to attain a decisive advantage or "victory" at whatever price. From the standpoint of deterrence by pain, the distinction between countervalue and counterforce weapons hardly matters, because both are capable of inflicting horrible punishment. For deterrence by denial, however, the distinction could become extremely important, since the emphasis falls on attacking the enemy's *means* of doing battle.

On this basis, one could argue, perversely perhaps but still consistently, that if, as MAD suggests, the threat of pain should be sufficient to deter war, then a build-up of U.S. forces should not prove inherently dangerous to deterrence. That is because whatever additional armaments we may deploy, the Soviets will always possess the ability to inflict horrible pain in retaliation. Even U.S. possession of a first-strike capability would leave the Soviet Union with upward of 2,000 submarine-based warheads with which to retaliate—an assured-destruction capability if ever there was one. One could oppose a build-up on grounds that it was costly or wasteful, but not on the grounds that it would lead to war. In other words, for the same reason that we are counseled not to feel threatened by the Soviet build-up, the Soviets should not feel threatened by ours. If the logic of deterrence by pain is in fact valid, war should not be made more likely simply by a build-up on one side or another.

But conversely, if the mere belief by American leaders (however fallacious) that nuclear war were in some sense "winnable" would make war more likely—and this is the gravamen of the charge against the Reagan administration—then it follows that a similar belief by Soviet leaders (however fallacious) would have the same result. Our ability to inflict pain—i.e., our "assured-destruction capability"—would not in the final analysis be sufficient to deter.

Moreover, if, as is also often argued, moral suasion is insufficient to wean American leaders from this belief—if they must be denied the physical capability to accomplish what they would set out to do—then it follows that Soviet leaders also must be denied this capability. In America, we can place political pressure on the administration not to build the requisite weapons. But in the Soviet case such pressure on our part is futile. Indeed, the Soviets have already acquired the basic elements of a war-fighting capability and continue to acquire at a fantastic rate weapons whose only purpose is manifestly not to inflict pain but rather to circumscribe or if possible deny our ability to retaliate short of mutual suicide.

Furthermore, it is well established that Soviet strategy envisions even central nuclear war to be winnable (a fact borne out by the nature of Soviet deployments). Our only option is thus to take the measures to render the hope of victory not just *humanly* but *militarily* implausible. This means, in the end, acquiring a capacity to inflict equivalent military damage and doing what we can to insure the invulnerability of our retaliatory capability.

In short, once one steps out of the logic of deterrence by pain, or MAD pure and simple, it becomes essential to think about the operational capabilities of weapons that one never intends to use. The capacity to deter war—to prevent war defensively from occurring—becomes logically indistinguishable from the ability to fight one. The recommendation to meet the Soviet build-up with a build-up of our own, therefore, comes not from belligerence or "imperial ambitions" on the part of American leaders, but simply from the straightforward necessity of securing our safety.

THE logic of MAD, in other words, has been applied in recent years more and more one-sidedly—to deter us from acquiring weapons to match and counter the Soviet build-up. In this way well-intentioned people have endeavored to stop the "arms race"; but the arms race is not war, and in stopping the arms race we are taking measures that logic and history suggest are making war more likely by making it more "thinkable"—for Soviet leaders.

The thinking embodied in MAD and arms control has tended to skew our discussions of these matters, so that we have come to debate the decision to acquire new weapons as though we were debating a decision to use them—as though adding to our arsenal, even for avowedly defensive purposes, were equivalent to launching an attack. The peculiarity of this position needs to be appreciated. At a time when the Soviet Union is adding MIRVed ICBM's to its arsenal at the rate of 175 to 200 per year, building hundreds of new aircraft, scores of new naval vessels, and thousands of new tanks, public figures in the United States rail against the procurement of the MX missile—the first new U.S. ICBM to be contemplated in over a decade—as though it were a heinous crime.

Indeed, the metaphors that we employ in political discourse routinely treat the mere procurement of weapons as an action equivalent to murder. Writing of the administration's plans for a build-up, Theodore Draper has commented that deterrence "may yet equal liberty for the number of crimes committed in its name." But an important distinction is being overlooked here. The "sins" committed in the name of liberty involved the actual

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killing of human beings; what Draper is discussing is merely a U.S. build-up undertaken to counter Soviet deployments and to deter aggression—i.e., precisely to prevent such weapons from being used. Yet he speaks as if the mere procurement of a weapon constituted an atrocity.

Even the Catholic bishops have contributed to this moral perspective, describing the "arms race" in their pastoral letter as an "act of aggression" against "the poor." It may be that if defense spending were reduced throughout the world there would be more spending for the poor. But the United States is arming with the intention of defending itself, and not of persecuting its less fortunate citizens. So remote has public discussion in the West grown from the life-and-death realities of politics that we seem at times to have lost the capacity to differentiate between maintenance of peacetime defenses and the actual waging of war.

Little wonder that, in this looking-glass moral universe where arming for self-defense tends to be counted as equivalent to murder, an American administration has difficulty making a persuasive ethical case for its defense policies. But it must be understood that the moral objections to the administration's stance arise chiefly because the proponents of MAD succeed again and again in explaining away the rather simple and obvious *strategic* justification for the administration's actions. As a result, the debate must be conducted on the basis of premises so remote from the military realities with which policy-makers must cope that even the modest successes achieved by the administration in the public forum seem surprising. Our whole discourse about nuclear weapons is dominated by a moral vision rooted in discredited strategic assumptions—assumptions at best appropriate to the strategic reality of 1965 or 1972 and in any case wholly irrelevant to the vastly changed circumstances of the present. Yielding to the temptation to play to this pervasive "moral" outlook, the administration has ended up more often than not with a lame, self-contradictory compromise between its own straightforward strategic logic and the prevailing nuclear orthodoxies.

But what of the more common worry that the existence of a stronger American arsensal might conceivably tempt American leaders toward adventurousness or a dangerous confrontation, or the more serious charge that elements in the current administration would be willing, under certain circumstances, to initiate a nuclear war? The latter charge, in particular, is rendered simply incredible by the actual state of the American arsensal when compared with that of the Soviet Union. No nation would be contemplating war in such a state of military disarray. The United States has nothing like the superiority of forces that would allow it to envision attacking the Soviet Union, whether by nuclear or conventional means. Moreover, as the current administration is well aware, nothing in its defense programs envisions such superiority, or even, for that matter, "parity," if "parity" is very strictly defined. It is worth remembering that every major new strategic system advocated by President Reagan—the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, the Trident submarine—was originally proposed by previous administrations.

Indeed, the notion that the Reagan administration is contemplating war, for all its recent popular currency, is little less than ludicrous. Much has been made of the administration's supposedly fervent anti-Communism. But a government that cannot even bring itself to declare default on loans to Communist Poland or to withhold sales of wheat from the Soviet bloc to gain political and military leverage is hardly in a position to make the enormous economic sacrifices that would attend upon the actual waging of war. Besides, whatever various U.S. economic interest groups may gain from the "arms race," the West has nothing economically to gain from a war with the East. (For the East, of course, the situation is quite the opposite; much of the Soviet build-up has been designed to gain economic access to the West, preferably by political threats based on military power rather than the direct use of military means.) Our historical interest is not in conquest, but rather in securing trading partners—so much so that we can hardly restrain our commercial men from trading with our chief adversary even when such trade helps to build the Soviet military machine. There is simply nothing in the makeup of the Western commercial democracies to lead them to want war with the Soviet Union. That this needs to be said at all is a measure of how far we have fallen from basic self-understanding. What is ironic is that Soviet officials, for all their disingenuous protestations to the contrary, are more aware of these realities than many of our own citizens

At the same time, there is a point at which refusal to confront amounts to open retreat, and it is here that we must face up to the implications of possessing nuclear weapons. The world is still a dangerous place, and the political freedom of the West rests in the final analysis on the strength of the American arsenal. The vast economic power of America and Western Europe avails nothing if at the critical moment this economic power could not be translated into military force. Yet we seem at once too craven and too greedy to be willing to pay for our own defense.

Many in Europe and America appear to have convinced themselves that totalitarian rule would be tolerable. For these it is useful to remember that the combined casualties of this century's two world wars did not yet equal the number who died under Communist rule in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe before, during, and after World War II. Nazi Germany was responsible for the extermination of six million Jews; Communist Russia, by moderate estimates, for the murder of *ten times* that many people. To this day some two

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million people suffer in concentration camps in the Soviet Union. Hundreds are committed to psychiatric hospitals for "political" offenses. And the worst horrors of the Great Purge are being reenacted today in Afghanistan, where thousands have been subject to summary executions and the most appalling tortures—to which the Western democracies, as is their wont, turn a deaf ear. These—and not the "arms race"—are the horrors of our time.

Yet there is one important step in addition to upgrading our nuclear forces that can be taken toward reducing the chances of nuclear war: it is to deploy conventional forces in sufficient numbers to deter aggression in Europe and other areas of "vital interest"—which is only to say where the Soviet Union may threaten the West itself or the very basis of the West's long-term survival. There is very broad support, in principle, for such a proposal. But unfortunately, many who have campaigned most vociferously against nuclear arms have also worked to close off this critical alternative. The American Catholic bishops offer an emphatic critique of the "first use" of nuclear weapons in Europe, but are considerably less clear regarding the only viable alternative—namely, a build-up of conventional forces. Many Senators and Congressmen who campaign against the MX also consistently vote against increases in the defense budget that would expand conventional procurement. At a time when the conventional forces of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations outnumber those of the Western alliance by several times, our legislators have set off on a crusade against "waste" in the Pentagon, whose inevitable effect is to erode already shaky public support for defense spending generally.

All this is done in the service of what are understood to be moral goals. Yet throughout this debate we have been tending to treat as "moral choices" what, in light of accumulated facts, barely appear to be "choices" at all, let alone choices in which ethical considerations could be held paramount. It is not merely that Soviet forces are gaining on the United States; it is that by every measure that could be counted meaningful, the Soviets have overtaken us. We talk as though the decision facing us were between maintaining parity and acquiring some kind of strategic "superiority," when the choice is in fact between bare parity and an inferiority in both nuclear and conventional armaments that increases by the month. We talk of "threatening" the Soviet Union, as though we had the comparative force to make that any more a real option. Given our history, it is only natural that we would conduct these discussions in an atmosphere of confidence, assuming that we had the ability to choose among a plethora of options. Through most of our postwar history such discussions have occurred in a climate of American freedom and strategic superiority. What Americans fail to understand are the implications of having come to an end of this era.

It has now become almost axiomatic in public debate that an adequate ethical response to the problems posed by nuclear weapons requires a heightened moral awareness. Yet so plain are the horrors of nuclear war, and so inescapable are the problems facing us, that it is hardly clear anything more than ordinary decency is required to form an adequate moral response. The fundamental moral imperatives of our time would seem both simple and apparent: to prevent nuclear war, and to prevent at least the existing democracies from falling under totalitarian rule. One need not be a saint or a visionary or a moral philosopher to understand and embrace these goals. Indeed, it can be argued that from the beginning of the nuclear era, decent people in the democracies have never wanted anything else. In this debate the really critical questions facing us are not in the strict sense moral but rather political and strategic. It is on a clearer understanding of these latter issues that our survival now urgently depends.

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Blaming Israel

Ruth R. Wisse

AFTER a period of intense political turmoil, Israel appears to be momentarily outside the eye of the storm. The recent official visit to Washington of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir confirmed an improvement in relations with the United States. In the negotiations on joint military measures to counter Soviet influence in the Middle East, Israel was treated not as the unfortunate regional dependent but as a strategic ally with many mutual if also separate interests. Furthermore, these mutual interests were subsequently impressed upon the next visitor to Washington, President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon, who was encouraged to deal directly with the Israelis and to resist the threat of Syrian control.

While Israel was securing its friends, moreover, its enemies were being temporarily silenced. The PLO's destruction of Tripoli reminded the world of the evil purposes to which the terrorists were pledged by definition and committed in deed. The weakening or collapse of this terrorist army could open new opportunities for peace with Jordan. The damage to the PLO's romantic image must benefit all those who still retain some residual moral vision.

It is tempting, in this intermittent calm, to anticipate the gradual integration of Israel as an unexceptional part of the Middle East and to savor new hopes of reconciliation. Yet among many of Israel's friends the absence of crisis has not engendered great peace of mind. One is reminded of the aftermath of the Six-Day War of June 1967, when Israel's astonishing victory could not dull the suddenly reawakened sense of its prior vulnerability. Though Israel proved its military ability in that war, Jews inside Israel and without did not soon recover from the revelations that had preceded it as the Arabs mobilized, cut Israel's lifelines, and defied the United Nations peacekeeping forces, while the international community demonstrated its disinclination or inability to arrest determined aggression.

So too the present quiet is marred by echoes of last year's climate of accusation and recrimination. Israel may have proved itself a reliable ally to the United States government; the collapse of the PLO may facilitate peace with Jordan and Lebanon. But as the anti-Israel rhetoric that was unleashed in the summer of 1982 showed, the image of the Jews as a malign force has unfortunately recovered some of its old mythic potency, with consequences not likely soon to disappear.

Only a self-regulating study on the part of newsmen and opinion-makers could begin to explain the unprofessionalism that characterized much reporting of the 1982 campaign in Lebanon. Here and there, abuses have been admitted. In my own country of Canada, the Ontario Press Council censured the Toronto *Star* for a series of "eyewitness" reports of Israeli army brutality, also carried by a number of dailies in the United States, that were later proved "erroneous." Public-affairs groups in several communities have won from local editors admissions of misrepresentation and bias. But this does not yet tell us why some in the North American media should have welcomed the opportunity of trumpeting Israel's culpability rather than providing balanced coverage of an international conflict.

The mythic undercurrent in the reporting on the 1982 campaign shows through a small, otherwise insignificant item that appeared in a front-page box in my local paper on July 28, 1982, beside a four-column headline: "Israelis Bomb Beirut Civilians: High Toll Feared." The lead story, giving alternate figures of 480 dead, 350 dead, 120 dead, along with allegations that "the size of the bombs being dropped appeared to be bigger than before," was a model of biased reporting. The story itself offered no explanation of why Israel might have been hitting civilian targets, but the boxed item, lifted out of an original UPI report, offered the following interpretation:

> *Timing of raids significant?* Israel's bombing runs on West Beirut yesterday came at 2:42 P.M. and 3:38 P.M., the numbers of the two United Nations Security Council resolutions acknowledging the right of Israel to exist.
>
> Reporters and diplomats who have watched the progress of the 53-day-old invasion said they believed the timing was more than a coincidence.
>
> United States Congressman Paul McCloskey said

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on Sunday that Yasir Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, had endorsed the two resolutions.

In this smart piece of innuendo, the speculation is that Israel decided to bomb Beirut civilians simply to spook its enemies, yet even so there is no attempt to explain what the alleged "significance" of the timing would be, or who would be expected to get the message, much less how something described as a bombing run could be read to the minute by those on the receiving end. An inquiry at the time to the United Press office in New York revealed that the word "reporters," at the start of the second sentence, was not in the original text, which had attributed the insight about the timing of the raids to unnamed diplomats alone. The word had been added by our local news editor, who was evidently concerned about the flimsiness of the item as news and, rather than dump it, chose rather to shore it up with another "source." As for the diplomats, UPI, asked to confirm their existence (without revealing their identity), refused to do so because of the pressure of the war going on!

Though the creation of non-news is an everyday affair, one wonders about the thrust of this malice. Did the reporter who filed the item and the news editors everywhere who ran it believe that Israel would bomb civilians in order to spell out a message on their flesh? Or did they enjoy playing with such an idea because of its implausibility, or because it would make a startling impression? In either case, the mythologizing process, of which this item is but a minor example, could hardly be said to be based on the military actions taken by Israel but rather to derive from the imagination of the people charged with bringing the news of those actions to the West.

To be appreciated in context, the myth of Israel's culpability advanced by the media should be juxtaposed with their treatment of the other side, both at the time and later. Indeed, the contrast between press coverage of Beirut in late 1982 and of Tripoli in late 1983 is most instructive. This time, as hospitals collapsed and civilians bled, there were no inflated casualty figures, no harrowed victims seen on television shouting invective at their murderers, and no protests by the Austrian chancellor or other heads of state against the "gigantic crimes" being perpetrated. With Israel out of the picture, the delivery of images of moral anguish no longer seemed in anyone's interest.

In September 1982 hundreds of stories and editorials and columns expressed outrage at Israel's sin of omission in failing to prevent the massacres in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, and pumped up a sense of moral indignation among Jews and non-Jews throughout the world. But while moral scrutiny may be admirable, selective moral scrutiny is a retreat from morality. The exclusive focus on Israel's culpability, without anything approaching a comparable emphasis on Phalangist criminality, or on the PLO outrages which the massacres sought to avenge, demonstrated merely that Israel was the only entity in the region, and Jews the only religious community, of whom morality was expected. The call for moral behavior was thus cynical, wholly subject to political convenience, and lacking any real concern for the lives of the murdered civilians or any real indignation over the barbarism of their murderers, whom no one was prepared to hold accountable.

A commission to investigate the events surrounding the massacre at the two refugee camps was appointed by the government of Israel under pressure from its citizens and by the threat of defection from members of the government coalition. Following the Yom Kippur War of 1973 there had been a similar commission of inquiry to determine responsibility for military oversights that resulted in the needless loss of many Israeli lives. Self-scrutiny is guaranteed in Israel by the moral standards of its citizens, and perhaps even more firmly by the hyperactive democratic process that quickens the cause of "morality" in an open political battlefield.

Inside Israel, the Kahan commission did its job, and its findings resulted in dismissals and demotions that were fairly well in keeping with the measured severity of its recommendations. But outside Israel citizens of other democracies used the Kahan inquiry as a convenient moral catharsis, a happy diversion from the massacres themselves. It must have been sweet for Israelis to hear that some of their harshest critics, like Republican Senator Charles Percy, were now praising their country for keeping democracy alive and well, as if Israeli democracy, rather than Phalangist and PLO criminality, were the real issue in question. That Israel and Israel alone holds the world's lopsided attention has been reconfirmed by the recent and largely ignored rounds of Arab massacres in Lebanon, which show again that innocents killed with no Israelis around lose all claim to justice as well as mercy.

This focus on Israel—its failures, its immorality, its culpability—signifies in the first instance a great victory for the rejectionist Arab states and for the Communist bloc which uses hatred of Israel as an instrument of ideological unification. By maintaining the ideological pressure on Israel, the Arabs accomplish two major goals: they extend their war against the Jewish state, undermining its legitimacy and justifying their aggression against it; more important, they absolve themselves of accountability for their own political sins. Arab refusal to recognize Israel is a crime of thirty-five years' standing, and one against which the Jews of Israel have been able to find no redress. But unless there is someone to

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prosecute a crime, it goes unnoticed, and as long as the Arabs succeed in making Israel the sole or primary target of "moral" investigation, their own record of criminality can be concealed and forgotten.

Propaganda is most effective when the message gets across without an awareness of who the messenger is. The transformation of Israel over the past decade in the public imagination from a land of promise to a "tragic mistake," from the victim of aggression to the perpetrator of aggression, must be acknowledged as one of the most effective propaganda campaigns of all time, the more so as it appears to have happened spontaneously.

It requires an increasing effort of will to recall the bare historical facts of the Arab-Israel conflict, beginning with the Jews' acceptance and the Arabs' rejection of the partition proposal of 1947. No one will ever know whether those Arabs actually living in the region of Palestine would have accepted partition or not, because the states of the Arab League did not give them the option. Their concerted attack against Israel upon its establishment in May 1948 resulted in the flight of many Palestinian Arabs from their homes; continuing Arab hostility in the years immediately thereafter resulted in the forced evacuation of almost as many Jews from Arab lands to Israel. In this involuntary exchange of populations there was great inequity. The Jewish refugees were resettled by Israel, while the Arab refugees were maintained in camps to serve as permanent political pawns. (Holding civilians hostage is thus nothing new to the PLO, some of whose members were themselves held hostage by their Arab "brothers" for all the years that the Arab states still hoped to push the Israelis into the sea.)

At any point between 1948 and the present time the Arab states were free to settle the Palestinian question by accepting Israel's presence and agreeing to seek an accommodation on territory, mutual security, and mutual compensation. But the Palestinian refugees were never as important to the Arabs as was the war against the Jewish state, or, rather, they were important only insofar as they could serve as a weapon in that conflict. To sanction the resettlement of these people would have meant forfeiting the most visible sign of Israel's "incursion" into the region, and admitting that Israel was there to stay.

Thus, the Palestinian Arabs have been exploited not by Israel, which accepted the principle of regional partnership as the condition of its existence, but by the Arab states that have continued to seek regional hegemony. During all the years the West Bank of the Jordan was under Jordanian rule, the refugees were not resettled there, either in an independent ministate or in an autonomous political zone. Nor was Jordan inclined to reclaim the territory after losing it in 1967, for to do so would have meant concluding a peace treaty that accepted the reality of Israel as a permanent neighbor. The single most salient fact of Middle East politics is that Israel has not been able to pressure the Arabs into peace because it has had nothing to offer except its own, unwelcome, presence. Until the Arabs decide to accept this presence, there is no way their refugees can be made secure.

However cruel this tactical deployment of a civilian population, it has paid off handsomely for the Arabs, especially in recent years. Unable to destroy Israel in war, they have turned the "homeless" into a weapon of political propaganda that seeks to undermine the legitimacy of Israel as a prelude to its elimination. The Palestinians give Arab states of every stripe of cruelty the right to assault Israel at the international level and to spread a campaign of hatred against "Zionism" throughout the Western world. Having first insured that their brethren remain homeless, the Arabs can now point to their plight as proof of Israel's crime.

THE Arab defeat in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 coincided with a dramatic rise in Arab economic fortunes and consequent political influence. Making full use of their new power, the Arabs extended the war against Israel into other areas: they attempted a worldwide economic boycott of Israel which, while not entirely successful, cut off several established avenues of trade and prevented Israel from opening many others; they strong-armed oil-dependent countries, particularly in Africa, into severing diplomatic ties with Israel; and they transformed the United Nations with all its constituent agencies into a permanent forum of vilification. They also mounted a propaganda war based on the slogan that Zionism is racism, which was steered through the United Nations General Assembly as resolution 3733. This slogan, defining the Jews as the single people in the world that is *not* entitled to a country, enshrined a new form of anti-Semitism in the language of our day.

The genius of this idea as an instrument of Arab aggression has not been sufficiently recognized. A decade after the Yom Kippur War, the Arab interpretation of the Jews has begun to take root not merely among their natural enemies but among the "best people."

The equation of Zionism—the Jewish right to a state—with racism functions as a tactic of inversion. The historical fact is that 21 Arab nations numbering some 165 million souls and covering 5.3 million square miles of territory refused, because of racial and religious intolerance, to sanction the presence of a Jewish state within their region. By inversion, Israel is accused of racism for refusing to accept an Arab state within *its* region. Arab aggression has sought for thirty-five years to destroy Israel. By inversion, Israel is accused of aggression for insisting on its right to defend its territory against attack.

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At the heart of this propaganda drive is the desire to resuscitate the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy, and to replace the post-Holocaust image of the Jew as victim with Hitler's image of the monster-Jew. This is rather hard to do, for how can a people so recently butchered be reindicted for their will to conquest? Also, to look soberly at the map of the world is to see the limits of "Jewish power." Yet the term "Zionism" provides the key to success. Like the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy, the proposition that Zionism is racism first magnifies the Jews to monstrous proportions, then holds them responsible for the grotesque image in the mind that has conceived it.

There is one additional point—the appeal of this new slogan to the ideological Left. Perhaps appeal is the wrong word. The anti-Zionist propaganda may well have originated under Communist auspices; its rhetoric certainly bears the marks. If so, the Arabs knew a good thing when they were offered it. But whatever its precise etiology, the fact that the Zionism/racism slogan has found a welcome on the international Left has irrefutably advanced its progress, and helped it penetrate Western consciousness at large.

Evidence of that progress lies close at hand. First prize this year at the annual competition held at Montreal's International Salon of Cartoons was awarded to a retouched version of the famous World War II photograph showing a little boy with raised hands being herded to his death with his fellow Jews in the Warsaw ghetto; in this new version, the boy is wearing an Arab headdress and the soldiers sport Stars of David. Since there was no cartooning involved in this cartoon, the prize was evidently awarded to the conception, a pictorial expression of the inverted allegation that Zionism is a form of racism. Israel's attempt to destroy the PLO, a terrorist organization explicitly created to eradicate Israel, is equated with the decision of the Nazis to eradicate the Jews. The accidental deaths of children at the hands of Israelis—and this because the PLO deliberately placed itself among schoolchildren and civilians—is equated with the systematic and deliberate murder of a million Jewish children. Cartoons distort by definition, presumably in the interests of revealing a hidden truth. The distortion here is itself a tool of distortion, inverting those who have tried to preserve life into those who kill. Yet the jury was excited by this revealed truth—excited enough to forget it was awarding its prize to a non-example of the art it had been assembled to judge.

The well-known author Roald Dahl, whose books have been a source of entertainment to millions of American children, has given perhaps the purest expression to this equation of Jews with Nazis. Reviewing a book called *God Cried*, which accuses Israel of deliberate extinction of the Palestinian Arabs, Dahl writes that "Never before in the history of man has a race of people switched so rapidly from being much-pitied victims to barbarous murderers." He laments what has happened to Palestine, once "a most beautiful country, embroidered all over with line upon line of orange trees and lemon trees and fields of green wheat and small white farmhouses and people working in the fields." We all know, says Dahl, what corrupted this idyll. "The Jews came pouring in with American money and American guns and created the state of Israel and out went the Palestinians." His piece concludes with a call—to the *Jews*—to place Begin and Sharon in their own Nuremberg tribunal and thus prove that Jewish conscience is still alive. "Now is the time for the Jews of the world to follow the example of the Germans [*sic*] and become anti-Israeli. But do they have the conscience? And do they, I wonder, have the guts? Or must Israel, like Germany, be brought to her knees before she learns how to behave in this world?"

To see how deeply the new indictment of Jewish criminality has taken hold, one need go no further than the *New Yorker*, which this past year ran two major articles on the Middle East, Jacobo Timerman's "The Longest War," since published as a book,* and a profile of King Hussein of Jordan by John Newhouse (September 19, 1983). Timerman's attack on Israel for the war against the PLO in Lebanon should have been recognized as simple hate-mongering: it imputes collective guilt to the Jewish people for actions committed by the Israeli army in a situation of limited war; it fails to present, even in token form, the position of the democratic majority of the country or of its elected government; it propounds, in the name of "we Israelis," a political position held at the time of writing by 2 percent of the population; it does not deal with the Arabs or ascribe any blame even to the PLO.

By contrast, the profile of King Hussein offers the kind of treatment normally reserved (as Martin Peretz of the *New Republic* has pointed out) for Oscar de la Renta. From its opening description of Hussein's lonely and difficult role—which might be less lonely though more difficult if Jordan were a more democratic place—the article goes on to praise the king's courage, skill, amiability, moderation, sympathy, and warmth. Of Hussein's slaughter of Palestinians in what came to be known as Black September, Newhouse writes, "At times, especially in the 1960's, Hussein has perhaps been unnecessarily severe in his dealings with the large Palestinian constituency." This sentence is particularly stunning since it figures in a discussion of Hussein's qualities of exceptional tolerance and leniency.

The *New Yorker* article on Jordan marks a significant advance in the mythologizing of Israel.

* My review of it appeared in COMMENTARY, March 1983.

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Although Newhouse's piece is ostensibly about the monarch of Jordan, and contains obligatory information about Hussein's upbringing and his skill at survival, the focus from beginning to end is on the king's main problem—Israel, "a rogue state that can and does bully neighbors because its military strength exceeds that of the entire Arab world." According to this article, Israel in 1948 received the "lion's share" of Palestine and has continued its expansionist policies ever since, and most particularly under the imperial and aggressive Likud government that came into office in 1977. Since no map is appended, the reader is no doubt expected to imagine that Israel is the size of Jordan, Jordan the size of Israel, when in fact the proportions are over three to one in Jordan's favor.

Not only is the inversion tactic of Arab propaganda given full historical credence in this account, but an important new feature is added: Hussein takes over from Arafat the mantle of threatened victim. Israel, it seems, continually thwarts the poor king's desires for peace and accommodation while also threatening the stability of his country and his throne. With Newhouse to assist him in obscuring his Machiavellian record in the complex game of Arab Middle East politics, Hussein emerges as the vulnerable prey of his own vulnerable prey.

THE Zionism/racism campaign has also made its way onto the campus. At the State University of New York at Stony Brook recently, a professor of political science defined three forms of racism: "Nazism in Germany; Apartheid in South Africa; Zionism in Israel." As a possible term-paper topic he suggested the statement, "Zionism is as much racism as Nazism was racism." Students reportedly congratulated the professor for allowing them to disagree with this thesis. When protests were lodged, the faculty defended the professor on grounds of free speech.

One wonders, idly, why the professor did not propose a more accurate distribution of examples for his inquiry into racism: Nazism in Germany; Apartheid in South Africa; Pan-Arabism in the Middle East. For there are striking parallels between the Arab refusal to tolerate a pluralistic Middle East and the two other forms of supremacism advanced in this short list. The Arab campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state has all the markings of a racist campaign, and uses many of the accusations made familiar by the anti-Semitism of earlier periods. Indeed, the equation of Zionism with racism, by disallowing the right of Jews, and of Jews alone, to a state, is as clearly racist as any other invitation to destroy them. But perhaps professors are entitled by the rights of free speech to *incite* racism on campus.

The implications of such a conception of free speech were spelled out last autumn at the University of Ottawa, the only bilingual university in Canada. There, the executive committee of the Student Union barred Jewish student organizations from its facilities on the grounds that they were Zionists, hence racists, hence disqualified from using the common rooms. Though these actions were stopped within several weeks by the university administration, they are the logical consequence of the hate campaign that has Zionism/racism as its motto. If Zionism is racism, and Jews are Zionists, then Jews are unfit to walk upright among the cadres of unblemished mankind.

Those who fail to recognize this equation as itself a racist slogan, and who fail to oppose it, conspire in consolidating a new form of anti-Semitism that has as its goal the delegitimation not only of the Jewish state but of the Jews whose state it is.

IT MUST be acknowledged that Israel is partly to blame for its faltering image, though for reasons quite different from those that are normally advanced. From 1948 on, the Arab assaults against Israel have had to be repulsed by at least an equivalent level of force if the citizens of the country were to save themselves from extinction. While the Israelis have never enjoyed sacrificing a steady percentage of their small population and a very great part of their resources on war, they have had to defend themselves in order to survive. Being almost the only country in the region that has not sought to swallow up its neighbor, Israel has concentrated on a defensive strategy, albeit one that has included preemptive strikes and counter-offensive measures. The Arabs and the Israelis alike know that if Israel were to lose its military capability it would be crushed—a fate that also threatens a number of non-Jewish countries of the region.

This permanent state of war is much harder on Israel than it is on the Arabs, and not only because of the vastly fewer resources of manpower from which it can draw. With the possible exception of the 1973 war, the Arab wars against Israel have been launched with the unambiguous purpose of imposing Arab hegemony over the region by destroying the "Zionist entity." By contrast, Israel's wish for acceptance leads in the very opposite direction from war, and for the overwhelming majority of Israelis this hope of approbation is what alone makes war tolerable. Each time a new generation of soldiers must go off to battle the parents are forced to acknowledge that their own sacrifice did not suffice, and to wonder if and when the cumulative effort of generations will finally bring about its desired goal.

The imbalance of aims—the elimination of Israel on the part of the Arabs, the desire for acceptance on the part of the Jews—has ironically proved costly to Israel in the propaganda war. While almost every Arab spokesman, statesman, or activist looks for an opportunity to rail against Israel, the Israelis make every effort to refrain

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from counter-criticism, as if fearing to antagonize the people whose acceptance they still hope to win. Israel boasts some of the finest centers of Arab studies in the world, and its intelligence agencies could provide damaging lowdown on the abuses of various Arab regimes. Yet the published findings remain largely neutral; they are hardly ever put to effective defensive use, let alone exploited for anti-Arab argumentation.

It was not until last year that the World Zionist Organization developed materials to counter the Zionism/racism defamation; I wonder whether anyone has ever seen them put to use. The absence of a creative Israeli information office was particularly distressing in the summer of 1982, when those looking for clarification of the war's progress and objectives could hardly find effective material. It is strange that the Jews, who believe they have some talent for the life of the mind, should prove so inept at exercising it to their own advantage.

NO WONDER, then, that there are distinct signs of demoralization among some Jews nowadays, a growing sense of confusion, a loss of confidence in Israel's "meaning," a mood of defeatism that finds frequent expression in the word, "tragedy." One hears among Jews (not among Arabs) about the tragedy of Zionism, the moral tragedy of the Jews, even about the tragedy of Israel's success! There are also hints of apocalyptic doom. A nice young Jew at Harvard says in conversation that maybe it will be necessary to conceive once again of a Jewish Diaspora without a Jewish homeland because the "price of maintaining it may be growing too high." Apparently those who pay the least may come to feel least inclined to pay; a passing mood, perhaps, but the worm has gotten into the apple.

A small measure of success in the Arab-Communist attempt to delegitimize the state of Israel can also be charted among those Diaspora Jews who have begun to react in familiarly apologetic and defensive ways to anti-Semitism. As a still sensitive minority, they are bound to be discouraged by the anti-Zionist drive that blackens the image of Israel and of those who are expected to defend it. Difficult as it may have been for Jews in America to see the Israelis attacked over three decades by belligerent Arab states and terrorist units, at least these confrontations did not lower Jewish moral prestige. In fact, some American liberals and leftists who had initially been against the creation of the state were persuaded by the continuing martyrdom of Israel that they could support it without unnecessary damage to their otherwise anti-parochial and universalist views. Liberals are drawn to the defense of the underdog, and Israel's disadvantage in its wars against the Arabs proved helpful in winning it the sympathies of liberal Jews.

The Zionism/racism slogan targets this very constituency. Mounting accusations of Israel's racist nationalism, its "discriminatory" immigration policy, its expansionist imperialism, its mistreatment of the Arabs, can catch in their net those Jews who had only been encouraged to go along with the notion of a Jewish state on the grounds of Jewish suffering, not of Jewish national rights. If a Jew believes, as one such has written, that "Israel is a kingdom of the mind. Jerusalem is a metaphor, the promise of justice," he can be readily convinced of the Zionism/racism proposition by the endless available proofs of imperfection in the actual Israel and of inequality in the earthly Jerusalem.

The movement of partial dissociation from Israel has kept pace with the intensity of the Arab anti-Israel campaign, reaching its plateau, no doubt temporary, in late 1982. The sight of Israelis launching a military offensive as they had not done since 1956, and to such a hostile reception in the Western media, dismayed many Diaspora Jews who were now being asked to align themselves with a distinctly unpopular and putatively immoral society. In America as in Israel there were many Jews of all shades of thought who questioned the wisdom of the offensive, as a result of their own political disposition, or their own habit of skepticism, quite without media prompting. But while in Israel universal conscription and the demands of national defense require that all citizens share in maintaining the country, irrespective of their private reservations, there is in the Diaspora no analogous principle of Jewish "conscription" and only in a relatively small sector any sense of Jewish duty.

The organized Jewish community did try to come to the political defense of the country as ably as it could, but with only limited results. At the same time, other Jews began to urge on the Diaspora communities a policy that amounted to capitulation. Jews too, they said, should agree to make Israel (rather than Arab opposition to Israel) the main focus of their political attention by turning their energies inward, to self-criticism. American Jews were encouraged not to support the government of Israel but rather to join in attacking those of its policies they considered unwise or imprudent. This they would do under the banner of "dissent," and also out of loving concern for the object of their criticism.

According to advocates of this line, American Jewry had been giving Israel full financial and political support without receiving a reciprocal right to speak out on the wisdom or morality of its actions. This policy of "silence" was interpreted by the government of Israel as implicit approval. In the past, under Labor governments, this may have been acceptable, but now it could no longer be maintained, since under the Likud government Israel had embarked on a dangerous course, one that would cause irreparable harm to the country if it were not reversed. The disposition of Judea

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and Samaria, relations with Palestinians and the PLO, the incursion into Lebanon—these were matters that concerned all Jews, not only Israelis; precisely because they loved Israel so, American Jews had to take a stand against Israel's government.

Now, there has grown in Israel a grass-roots movement called Peace Now that unites under its broad roof opposition to current government policies. Jews in the Diaspora have been invited to join this opposition and to make their voices heard in their own communities. The encouragement of this movement, which has enjoyed the same measure of media popularity that Israel currently lacks, has been so strong that many American Jewish organizations have found themselves apologizing for *not* inciting such oppositional activity among their members. Even those who know there is something wrong with the argument don't know quite how to gainsay it; after all, why should anyone who believes in democracy and free speech seek to stifle "dissent," and particularly Jews whose tradition has always sanctioned it?

Yet there are fundamental distortions in this argument, which turns out to be almost the opposite of what it claims. To begin with, there is the banner word, dissent: which Jews have an actual claim to the title? Except for a limited percentage of affiliated Jews who really do submit to communal discipline, the majority of Diaspora Jews have never accepted Jewish authority in any form, and can hardly be said to dissent from a group to which they do not pretend to adhere. If dissent means advocacy of sentiments different from those of the majority, then the affiliated Jewish community, which undertakes to support Israel as a matter of common duty, constitutes the real dissenting group.

Here we see the principle of inversion at work within the Jewish community itself. For the encouragement of "dissent" in late 1982 was intended to transform the Jews from a dissenting into a *consenting* community, since it tried to bring Jewish attitudes toward Israel into line with those of American opinion-makers. By pretending that the organized Jewish community comprised an American "establishment," the Jewish critics of Israel camouflaged their failure to dissent *on behalf* of Israel from the establishment to which most of them actually belong—the establishment of the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post* and *Time*, of the board rooms and academic lounges which did not approve of Israel's actions and delighted in the company of Jews prepared to join in the condemnation.

The issue of an alleged communal "silence" is related to this primary distortion. Dozens upon dozens of public articles, pronouncements, and interviews by American Jews appeared this past year attacking Likud policies; many of them contained a comical protest at the way criticism of Israel was being stifled by something called the Jewish community. More ridiculous still, during this same period few if any analogous attempts were being made by Jewish spokesmen to promote or even to explain Likud positions with intelligence and sympathy. If "silence" is the problem, the first order of business ought to be an inquiry into why supporters of Likud have hardly any voice in contemporary American Jewish affairs.

The appeal by the leadership of Peace Now for an indigenous Diaspora politics of opposition is especially alarming. Peace Now is the first political movement in Israeli history that has sought help from outside the country to defeat a duly elected democratic government. True, it has been customary for political parties in Israel to solicit contributions to their coffers and recruitment to their ranks. But Peace Now has established an altogether different relationship; it does not seek support for an Israeli political party, it seeks organized *opposition* to the state of Israel as represented by its government (which is the only way a democratic country is ever collectively represented).

Because it does not submit to the discipline of a political platform, Peace Now arrogates to itself the privilege of sloganeering on behalf of an Arab-Israeli "peace" without having to spell out to an electorate its own conditions for such a peace. And it remains free to preach dissidence abroad without fear of political reprisal at home. Thus, far from lending moral authority to the "alternative" politics of Jews in America, Peace Now shows that some Israelis have become just as prepared as some Diaspora Jews to exploit the democratic process as a means of imposing their own solutions.

Finally, Peace Now and its American supporters exhibit a mode of behavior that might be called the ghettoization of Jewish politics, by which I mean the tendency to ignore the external enemies of the Jews who seem too formidable to deal with, and focus on putative enemies within. In the case of Peace Now, the enemies within are, predictably, those Jews who *support* the government of Israel. This has not gone unnoticed. As Yossi Klein writes from Jerusalem in the *Village Voice*:

> By blaming other Jews for Israel's predicament, the peace movement repeats a classic Diaspora pattern. Like [the extremist Orthodox sect] Neturei Karta accusing the Zionists of provoking the wrath of God, Peace Now blames [Diaspora support for Israel] for incurring the ostracism of the world. And like Neturei Karta, it may be comforting to strike at the most accessible enemy and name a specific cause for Israel's troubles. But unfortunately for the peace movement, the isolation of Israel predated the rise of Likud, beginning during the Yom Kippur War and the oil boycotts, during the rule of Labor. It was, in fact, at least partially the inability of Labor Zionism to fulfill its promise of normalizing the Jewish condition that led Israel to embrace Menachem Begin.

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Klein's analysis of the internalizing tendency in Israel's politics provides an exact definition of what is also happening in the Diaspora. The more nervous and discouraged Jews become in the face of anti-Israel pressure, the more they will argue among themselves. But to urge this internal quarrel, this ghetto politics, on organized Jewry as if it were a point of pride rather than a curse of weakness is to appeal to the lowest reflex the culture has developed.

THERE is a broad tide of opinion, also among Jews, according to which the practice of holding Israel to a higher moral and political standard is a great compliment to its people: both a ratification in contemporary, secular terms of the covenant Jews made with their God and a manifestation of pride in a fellow democracy. Israel's moral credibility is cited as justification for severer—and sometimes exclusive—criticism of it; after all, the country's own high expectations of itself invite such special scrutiny.

Seductive as this line of reasoning may be, it is also a trap. For the Jewish moral quest is utterly independent of the claims of the Jews to exist as a people, the right of Israel to thrive securely as a nation. The real issue today, as over the past century, is not Jewish morality but the absence, still, of that reciprocity which should govern the relations of Jews with their neighbors. The pride some Jews express at being held to a higher standard conceals humiliation at not being able to win the status of equals, first in Europe, now in the Middle East.

As for Israel being the only functioning democracy in the Middle East, this fact is not a sound basis for harsher criticism either. Something in the liberal imagination yearns for soluble problems, and the identification of Israel as the culprit in the Middle East satisfies this expectation. It is admittedly difficult and frightening to face the reality of an Arab world that still balks, after thirty-five years, at the presence of a Jewish state. How much brighter a prospect if Israel could be identified as the obstacle to peace (even if this be the very premise of *Arab* propaganda). Israel, amenable to the pressures of democratic persuasion, and perhaps vulnerable enough to have solutions imposed upon it from without, appears much the easier key to the locked conflict.

Arab propaganda blames Israel in order to obscure its own destructive intentions. When Western liberals pick up this theme, they nurture the quixotic hope that by blaming the more malleable party they can avoid confrontation with those initiating the conflict. Yet nothing can be gained by the pretense that the Israelis are responsible for the mistakes and injustices of others. Today, as in the past, it is for the Arabs to arrest the aggression against Israel and to grant it the belated recognition that could have prevented five major wars and could still, if granted, prevent others.

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Siberian Holiday

Fernanda Eberstadt

1. The Trans-Siberian Railroad

As WITH so much else in the Soviet Union, you wondered why they were willing to show you this gangrenous hulk of a land mass: bog in summer, permafrost in permawinter, a waste that seems to have been formed solely for the discomfort of convicts, nomad herdsmen, and anchorites. But railways are one thing that Communism hasn't savaged, and short of hitching them up in the courtyard of some Palace of Economic Achievement, the trains have got to go somewhere, and somewhere means Siberia. And so there we were, five summer tourists, secured in the vault of that moving medieval sideshow, the Trans-Siberian, riding westward.

We had flown first into Moscow, where much of the full impact of entering Soviet airspace is muted by the cocoon of dollars in which the foreigner travels. Moscow is a curious facsimile of cosmopolitanism, with frayed edges. Big-city staples—fast subway cars and tall buildings—draw the eye away from the absence of meat in the stores and plumbing in the houses, from the riveting spectacle of back-street life, with its dwarfs and holy idiots, its paint-thinner drunkards, hucksters, and tribesmen. (It is no anomaly that Moscow's most renowned private citizen is the sharpster called Boris the Gypsy.)

But a Moscow landing was nothing compared to our arrival, after an eight-and-a-half-hour flight, in Khabarovsk—the administrative center of the Soviet Far East, the city to which visitors from the Orient first fly on entering the Soviet Union, and where foreigners board the East-West run of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

Khabarovsk is a moldering colonial outpost of the Soviet empire—a sweet uncanny city which might force any Japanese tourist, setting foot for the first time on Soviet soil and armed with preconceptions about superpower decorum, to conclude that he is not in the Third World, even, but the fifth or sixth: a Macao without gambling, a Havana without cigars.

A kind of tropical nihilism prevails. Driving into town in the noonday sun, we saw men passed out cold under tamarisk trees, we saw an amputee on a wooden dolly wheeling himself furiously along the middle of an empty highway; at nightfall, in the sooty twilight, we watched a policeman guarding the liquor store, and were approached by a panhandler—a pretty blond child with Oriental features—who asked in a stage whisper if we had any American "Jews" (jeans) to sell.

Khabarovsk is a melancholy backwater of blistered river boats and boulevards deep in dried petals: a city suitable for some kind of aboriginal remake of *Showboat*—half rococo pagodas turned army barracks, half shanty settlements of a Mongol tribe said to wear fish-scale suits and worship river gods.

The river is the Amur: a primordial expanse of gray delta-ways which the Chinese call the "Black Dragon," following the legend that some demon of antiquity gave up the ghost in its waters, bleeding into perpetuity a thick unnavigable black sauce. It seems appropriate to the city's air of well-deserved neglect that it was some three hundred years after its settlement before a meddling Russian general discovered that the Amur led to the sea. In recent years, however, it has come into prominence by default: as more strategic sites like Vladivostok and Kamchatka have become armed camps, Khabarovsk is now a transit zone for the tourist trade.

We were penned up in the foreigners' waiting room at Khabarovsk Station with a load of pasty East German rubberneckers, and racks of printed propaganda. It was the usual Novosti truth-package that follows one from hotel lobby to airport lounge, delivering its Mickey Finn to one's powers of incredulity: "Chemical Weapons: A Gas Chamber for Humankind"; "International Terrorism: Who Is Behind It?"

Outside the waiting room squatted a herd of North Korean conscripts with pink cheeks and an air of glazed docility. They were allowed neither in the main lobby with the Russians nor in the tourists' lounge, but were obliged to crouch in the corridor between, polishing their boots with their fists and gaping in at us.

We boarded the train and were shown to the foreigners' carriage: a Victorian hive, reeking of disinfectant, with Turkish rugs and striped deck-

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chair canvas on the floor. We were deposited in first-class cabins, each with two benches swathed in starched linen and antimacassars bedeviling every extremity. At the end of our corridor lived a conductor, a conductress, and a compound of furnace, samovar, and coal scuttle, in which the conductress cooked the conductor fat curd pancakes at night.

There were few foreigners on this run and the carriage was fleshed out with safe Soviets. On one side of our suite was a schoolmaster on his way to a spa—squat, Mongol-looking, with a punchy curiosity that seized upon us and wrestled us to the ground. He wanted to know everything. He peppered us with questions about our travels and shook his head in genial amazement over how much we had seen and how little we had learned from it. Then he interrogated us on our schooling. Were most Americans taught Russian in grade school? No? He was extremely put out at this, although he himself knew no English, only a little rusty if serviceable German, resurrected from the eve of World War II. (Russians of late middle age are inclined to know German and no English, but are overjoyed, especially once outside Moscow and Leningrad, to discover that one is American and not East German as they take all white foreigners to be.) And Chinese? No? None? He puffed out his cheeks and shrugged in a great gesture of comic resignation. "Dollars speak," he concluded. His own prosperity was confirmed by a row of splendid gold teeth. To Soviets, who more than any other nation crave and seek out the stratifications and visible appurtenances of social standing, dental work is especially telling. The rich peasants and black-marketeers secure double sets of gold, party cadres and hacks go for silver and steel respectively, the rest eat cake and rot. It is said that when the Russians came to build socialism in the People's Republic of China, the Chinese used to make fun of them by sticking the silver from cigarette papers around their teeth.

On our other side were a mother and son, on their way to Moscow. The mother was a tiny redhead, intensely animated. (The USSR has two flavors of ice cream, but only one shade of hair dye: platinum had recently run out, and the red was a molting crimson.) Her son was an overgrown hulk with a frozen mouth and a facial twitch to rival Peter the Great's. He lolled outside our compartment day and night, playing Chinese Checkers with himself, and squinting in at us, first with one eye and then the other. "Talk to him please, he needs to meet people his own age," begged the mother of this forty-year-old child. We invited him in for a drink after dinner, he plunked himself down on the bed, went all coy and tongue-tied, and wouldn't be dislodged till past midnight.

This Ilya, it turned out, was a doctor at a dermatological institute in Khabarovsk. It struck us that a doctor catering to a clientele of soldiers coming from Sakhalin, Vladivostok, and Kamchatka, and of workers at what we took to be a nuclear reactor on the Amur in Khabarovsk itself (judging from convoy trucks sealed to keep out radiation), must come across some curious symptoms; but Ilya was a miracle of blankness. Any patient with a complaint more serious than crabs was sent to a specialist elsewhere, it seemed.

For a Moscow mamma's boy, what was it like to be posted in an overstaffed and overpaid institute in an idle barracks town in the Soviet Far East? Nothing, that was what it was like. Nothing at all. Radiation be damned: what about girls, or even a good movie? I had seen a movie house the size of a shopping mall on Prospekt Marx, which was offering for the next ice age or so the same double bill that was to dog us across the continent of Soviet Socialist Republics like a heat-seeking missile. It consisted of *Torpedoshchlop*, a Bulgarian sweetmeat, and *Tootsie*, which proved a disappointment to Russian audiences, to whom women who look enough like men to be taken for Dustin Hoffman in drag, and yet are considered indescribably delicious, are no big deal. "Oh, that," said our guide, when asked if she had seen it, and rolled her eyes.

Riding westward across the Soviet Union from its easternmost extremity is an act of invigorating perversity, bringing with it a sense of reintegration into an almost recognizable world. Like the frescoes of Judgment Day in which skeletons climb out of the grave to reassemble their far-flung relics of bone and kiss their loved ones, so the scattered particles of empire seem to rush together into a phalanx of steel and concrete. But good God, what concrete. Sweating, fizzling into rubble, concrete you couldn't sink a dead cat with—slapped into unfinished cities on the hill, weepy excrescences of a nearby coal mine or timber mill, whose cranes and derricks, sticking out at awkward angles, have rusted into place. Waiting for spare parts can be a full-time socialist activity.

The Far Eastern Economic Zone is a cruel graveyard. The ages of its factories, carved beneath the cross beams, shock: 1980, 1981, and they look as if they might have employed Decembrists. There are few houses and no people, cows, or chickens to be seen, but innumerable timber mills, their yards clotted with white birch rotting into compost, yards like mouths of Soviet teeth before the steel goes in.

This was Birobidzhan, the Promised Land to which Soviet Jewry had been sentenced in 1927, in a happy convergence of interests: Chinese wetbacks were threatening to swarm across the border, urban Jews needed to be converted into farmers, and Pacific military zones had to be fed and supplied. In an even neater stroke, this venture, unlike Stalin's later attempts at answering the Jewish question, had been substantially funded by the American and European Jewish communities, who, "being capitalists benefiting from all the good things in life . . . cannot sleep tranquilly knowing

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that a people akin to them by blood is suffering and being tormented." This, from Kalinin, is the terrorist-kidnapper's appeal to conscience.

Colonization was undertaken with little preparation and murderous haste. Birobidzhan was a region which, since its annexation in 1858, Russia had proved unable to colonize and so had used as a dumping ground for the former inhabitants of other, more desirable territorial acquisitions. When the first group of Jewish recruits arrived, they were met by a sparse welcoming committee: the descendants of the Koreans and Trans-Baikal Cossacks resettled there by Nicholas I. One can imagine the delight with which they anticipated sharing their few crusts with the new Jewish settlers. But (as the historian Salo Baron puts it), "Under the totalitarian Soviet regime, the local population could neither as frequently nor as vigorously voice its opposition to the new colonization as did its counterparts, the Arab residents of Palestine under the British Mandate." Birobidzhan today could be said to be precisely the sort of homeland the Palestinian Arabs might have wished for the Jews: a frozen swamp bounded by hostile Mongols, in which the Jews are far outnumbered by their historical enemy, the Ukrainians.

In our train ride across the Jewish Autonomous Republic, the station signs, whose Hebrew lettering is said to be this rat-trap's last remaining claim to Jewishness, had reverted to Cyrillic. When the train stopped for five minutes at Bira Station, we rushed into a wretched buffet and in halting Yiddish asked the waitress for a pickled egg. She gave us a look of stony enmity and pointedly turned to help the Russian standing behind us.

There remained one vestige, however, of the glorious dream on which Birobidzhan had been founded. On the outskirts of Bira, on the sky-high posters featuring steel-limbed glowing workers standing shoulder to shoulder against a scarlet backdrop, the young people depicted were a little swarthy, the noses distinctly hooked. They bore no resemblance to anyone in the villages we passed, whose natives looked as Ukrainians always have: pallid, sharp-boned, straw-headed.

One day we crossed the top of Mongolia, and the landscape shivered and broke, opening the eye to a prairie studded with herdsmen on horseback: men with broad spoon faces and needle-thin eyes, fat-tailed sheep, scarlet poppies. It was harvest time, and after the Mongol plains, the Golden Age: expanses of blond crew-cut fields cropped by slow, molten rivers, and streaked with flashes of pastoral, bawdy and poignant: fat, bundled figures tumbling in the haycocks and chasing one another with scythes; dripping white swimmers dancing around a bonfire to keep warm; a party of gnome-like railway workers picnicking at the edge of the forest.

As for us, we told stories and tried to keep sober in a vehicle designed for insulated oblivion. At night, we could not sleep, but went out to smoke in the corridor, staring into hard-driven rain, into slick black forest, flickering lights from a soldier's campfire, sudden gorges, a shocked illumination of army convoys and lone sentries. We fiddled with the shortwave radio, angling for broadcasts from a free country, and made do with the Peking Opera spirited up from the border through jammed airwaves. One night, at 3:00 A.M., we tuned into an English lesson for Chinese insomniacs.

And we tried to tease our guide for choice morsels from the Soviet board. This guide accompanied us throughout (we acquired a second with city visits). Nadezhda was a beauty, long round limbs, brown cow's eyes, and stubborn pursed mouth, prominent nose. Nadezhda was also a sleeper, one of those groggy, lingering adolescents who go comatose when decisiveness is required. Narcolepsy is clearly one rational manner in which to deal with the impossible situation that is Soviet life; Nadezhda did not drink.

Her father had been a naval commander, her widowed mother a diabetic. (You can imagine what a Russian diabetic's diet, even in Moscow, would consist of, where the only staple in ready supply is bonbons, and the only vegetables nine months of the year are white or blue.) Her only brother was an engineer on the Kola Peninsula, a high-pay death camp. Like most of the Arctic and desert "fliers" (short-shift migrant workers), he was waiting out a three-year sentence to return to Moscow. In the meantime, he begged Nadezhda to come visit him. "I get one vacation a year," she said, with a shrug. "For that I would rather go to the Black Sea than the Arctic Circle."

Nadezhda met her husband while they were both linguistics students at Moscow University. For several years now, she had been working at Intourist, a demanding job, while he was still a student, dawdling over a dissertation that sounded to her like a piece of cake. (The subject, however —the significance of phrasing in American newspapers—caused us to wonder if this husband of hers wasn't a student rather in the sense of the Iranian students who held our Americans hostage, since few officials even at high-level institutes have access to the free press.)

Though initially the couple lived with his parents, Nadezhda had moved back in with her mother. After a few months of sneaking home every day after work to do the shopping for her mother, clean the house, and cook dinner before going back to her husband's apartment, where she was treated like a guest, Nadezhda had found she missed her mother too much. But the estrangement from her husband did not prevent her from dogging him with an adoring and exasperated tenacity. "Every day I ask what is this doctorate about, again? When are you going to finish it? And he gets cross. All he does all day is ride his bicycle. Every morning he gets up and does his exercises for an hour, and then he goes off on his bicycle."

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And what was he doing this summer? While Nadezhda was obliged to lead our group through Siberia and Central Asia, the lowest circles of a Muscovite's hell, what was this rambler doing, she wanted us to know? "Studying? No, not he. Off with his friends on a canoe trip down the Ural. I asked him, 'Why can't you pick a river closer to Moscow?' "

BEING a devoted daughter and a discontented wife is not only a common but an almost inevitable feature of Soviet society. Later, we read an article posted on the wall in the hotel lobby in Novosibirsk, on the increasing breakup of Soviet marriages. The author's tone was one of jokey dismay. The article was entitled, "The First Pancake Is Always Flat," and his opening crack was that divorce in the Soviet Union is now so rampant that the application comes with the marriage license. Divorce is a particularly sore point in Siberia, where the rate is six to nine times higher than in Georgia or Armenia; it has been estimated that in Novosibirsk, one out of every two marriages hits the courtroom skids.

This malady is usually considered generational: one of the side-effects of a sustained period of peace and prosperity, when women think they can afford to be a little more remiss about husbands. But the Siberian author claimed that the primary reason for discord is woman's emergence as the family breadwinner. Recent figures show that it is predominantly wives who initiate divorce proceedings today, and, more significantly, men who are the more inclined to remarry. (Already the figures for remarriage of divorced couples in the Soviet Union are abysmally low, suggesting that not only marriage but adultery, too, is going out of business.)

In the cities of European Russia, women do the work and men, unwilling to be seen failing in an unworthy competition, have suffered themselves to become bad children: improvident if sometimes charming layabouts. (I do not know if wife-beating, that favorite Russian sport from the time of the first travelers' accounts, still reigns supreme, or whether, like bear-baiting, it has become impracticable.) One of the damages resulting from this marital imbalance is that women, fed up with their grasshopper husbands, tend to concentrate too much emotion, too many burdensome hopes and confidences upon their children, particularly as only children become the norm. On the other hand, children are the greatest joy in Soviet parents' lives. In few other places in the world does one see children so adored and cosseted: a small son carried on the shoulder of a military man out for a night on the town with his friends, gangly twelve-year-old girls done up in short gauzy dresses and patent-leather buttonshoes sprawled across the laps of mothers who cannot take their hands off them.

Divorced mothers, once objects of pity or contempt, are now applauded for giving the good-for-nothing the bum's rush. In confirmation of this contention, we had been told by the deputy chief of the Moscow Institute of Demography that unmarried mothers too have become increasingly accepted. As a matter of fact, she volunteered, there were several in that very institute. (I noticed at the time, though, that Nadezhda pursed her mouth and almost spat out the translation.) This tolerance, however, was being attributed to the drive to raise birthrates, and not to man-hating.

OUR carriage was luxe, but once beyond the foreigners' dining car and the string of third-class cars beyond it, one hit rock bottom. There, it smelled as if someone had tried to put out a fire with grain alcohol; beyond the booze was a stench of bandages and open sores.

Here in these cars were the workers—the Arctic slaves of the gold fields, the yellow-rainmakers of Djamboul, returning for the August break to Magnitogorsk, Kazan, or Omsk, for a free train-ride home is one of the shining perks of hard labor in the outlands. The cars were too cramped for everyone to sit upright, but four could lie horizontal all day reading comics and dozing, while two sailors played cards, or a mother dissected her child's hair into innumerable lice-free zones.

Jogging costumes were the mufti of the civilian passengers—not the padded playsuits Americans know but something faded, black, and punitive-looking, wasting away into leggings with frayed footstraps. When the train stopped for station breaks and all the passengers clambered out to smoke harsh Bulgarian cigarettes and buy pickled blue eggs from the peddler-women, it looked like a leisurely jailbreak. The only incongruous detail was the men's predilection for patent-leather platform shoes, which gave the hurried procession that bowlegged swagger one sees on the stage in Restoration plays.

Only one Russian was allowed to eat in the foreigners' dining car, with its red leather banquettes and red nylon roses. This was the maître d'hôtel's catamite, a nervy welterweight with a blue-black permanent wave: a bruised and brooding Valentino who, every morning, blazed a trail through an omelette, a veal cutlet, peas, and rice, with a hundred grams of vodka and a decanter of brandy to keep up his strength.

Rules or no rules, there is still bribery. One morning three black-marketeers came into the dining car: two Siberian truckers and their Moldavian toady, who had made their seasonal goldmine by smuggling and spying at the Chinese border and were determined to exhaust it before they got to Moscow.

There is an illusion in the West that under the auspices of the black market in the Soviet Union, one can subsist almost as well as anywhere else and keep one's dignity. It is not true. One can live

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garishly, but not well, and at a price few Westerners would be willing to pay. It is one of the silent continuities in Russian existence that if the Soviet system could be said to serve any human creatures, it would be noblemen and criminals, two classes which Communism was intended to eliminate. Only party brats and crime kings have access to those things which, Soviets are implicitly taught, alone make life worth living. Only racketeers can travel more or less freely within the internal borders of the empire, but this freedom bears its responsibilities. The grand hoodlum with dollars enough to rub shoulders with American students and mobility enough to trade with Afghans across the border reports his findings dutifully.

Kolya, one of the two truckers, was from Sverdlovsk—a factory town east of the Urals, distinguished for its death toll, having not only stiffed Nicholas and Alexandra but in recent years contracted a collective case of anthrax that put a unilateral freeze on much of its populace. One survivor, evidently, was this Kolya. It was his birthday and Edvard, the second trucker, had bought vodka, cognac, and Georgian champagne for the entire car.

Edvard, also a Siberian, was the gang leader, a balding blond with sun-scorched skin and a drunk's smarts: he introduced himself initially as Volodya and then forgot his alias mid-sentence.

The Moldavian had no name at all and was forbidden by his companions to talk to us. Moldavians are the *pieds noirs* of European Russia, despised as only the once-free can be despised by born slaves. Once they were part of Rumania. Once Rumania was part of the West. What I am now, you too will be, grins the death's head. Kolya and Edvard might see it differently if Soviets were taught history: Moldavia has been gang-banged successively by Scythians, Kievan princes, Tatars, Turks, and, in recent years, those obliging good old boys, the Germans and Russians. Siberians, on the other hand, have always enjoyed a certain latitude: after all, the old chestnut goes, what can they do to you—you're already in Siberia.

Edvard was pouring vodka and brandy at once into our tea glasses—the cocktail which ensued we called the Gravedigger. It is best drunk at nine in the morning, and at one gulp, as we did, with rousing toasts to ease the flow.

Toasting in the Soviet Union is a fine medium for sounding one's drinking companions' mission. Theirs was readily apparent; they were two-way transmitters, programmed to talk peace. I was disappointed at first to hear these desperadoes mouth milquetoast propaganda in their brandied pleas for disarmament, but I suppose it was a cheap price for them to pay to a system designed both to indulge and to utilize the outlaw's natural propensities: a rare if not unique union of Soviet supply and demand.

When the Moldavian finally opened his mouth, we saw why he hadn't been allowed to speak. The Moldavian had done his military service in Dushanbe, the capital of Tadjikistan, he volunteered: a euphemistic shorthand for combat in Afghanistan. He confirmed that the losses have been far higher than the Soviet government will admit; that the guerrillas are holy terrors who dress up as women at night and carry knives under their skirts; but that Russian soldiers, if not as resourceful, are dogged. And the Central Asian (i.e., Muslim) conscripts? He made as if to spit. We asked him about the Russian concern that high Muslim birthrates and a declining European population will create a predominantly Central Asian militia by the end of the century. He had not heard of this quandary but he understood that it might be a considerable worry. Was the fear then justified that Muslims sent to fight in Afghanistan and the Middle East would go over to the enemy side? The Moldavian was scornful. "No, it isn't fanaticism that is the problem, it is cowardice. Uzbeks and Tadjiks are just great corn-fed hicks who turn tail at the sight of fire."

Now Edvard, who was so drunk even his companions could not understand his Russian, decided that he, too, wanted to talk politics. But Kolya had begun acting up, and crossed even the extended borders of bribery. He had taken out his wad of twenty-rouble notes and begun to tear them up. The waitress rushed over to our table, and prized the red roubles from Kolya's loose fingers. "Get out. You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she told him, and pushed the three of them out of the compartment. He was ashamed. Thereafter, Edvard and Kolya took their slop hard-class like everyone else, and slunk past us in the corridors, eyes averted. Only the Moldavian sidekick, with an atavistic resilience, laughed at us, and shook his head.

ONE night, under a horned orange moon, we passed Lake Baikal, with its 108 strains of extinct fish: a milky sea, luminous and portentous as if it might turn to blood or cough up monsters that were minerals of flesh.

Even in daylight this was a landscape of dreams. The settlements were hewn log cabins with enormous pale-blue shutters. From a train window, one glimpsed fragments of a ramshackle chinoiserie: fretted summerhouses and weird pagodas rising from a compost heap, granaries and prison watchtowers that were brick Towers of Babel in a Moorish style. Each sizable town thrust forward its municipal garden upon the tracks: a gory herbacious border and a statue of Lenin. These statues attested to some hagiographical quirk I had not yet encountered. The state sculptors had portrayed Lenin's progress across Siberia as a kind of gastronomic tour: for every verst he gained a kilo, until, by Petrovskiiy Zavod, the Decembristville of Eastern Siberia, the exiled Lenin was practically a molten cannonball.

This was Siberia proper: the idiot child of Rus-

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sian history, alternately kept in the attic and starved, and then glutted with ruinously high expectations, in a continuum of cynical disregard. Like the rich man in *City Lights* who covers the tramp in drunken ravishments and avowals of brotherhood that stop just short of a loan, and never recognizes him the next day, so, sporadically, European Russia has visited its Asiatic orphan with plans for its reclamation. Visionary nights are succeeded by the next morning's cold stare, and after a feast of chicanery, slavery, boasting, splurging, and shambles, Siberia goes back into the doghouse.

Under most of the Old Regime, Siberia was considered nothing more than a chilly pen for dreamers. From time to time, the land would be scourged with a plague of prophets and prospectors like the scientist and scholar M.V. Lomonosov, whose slogan, "The might of Russia will grow through Siberia," the Soviets later were to adopt. Just as witnesses of the Black Death felt that destruction on such a scale could only have been delivered by the hand of God and with a purpose, so Russians would periodically speculate on possible justifications for the existence of Siberia.

In the late 19th century, hopes of the liberal and reforming elite converged with economic and strategic necessity. The need to counter Chinese immigration from the South and to shore up against the Japanese threat from the East, to supply European industries with raw materials and military installations on the Pacific with food and materiel—in short, to prepare for war—made the development of Siberia pressing. It was the Trans-Siberian Railroad which effected this transformation.

Chekhov, crossing Siberia in 1890, on the eve of the railroad's construction, could, with some expectation of seeing his prophecies fulfilled, gaze across the Yenisei River at the youthful city of Krasnoyarsk, and see in it a new Jerusalem rising on the far shore, a pearl of the permafrost that would redeem the entire continent from its malaise. "On the banks of the Yenisei, life began with a moan, but it will end with such prowess as we haven't even dreamed of . . . I stood there and thought: what an ample, bold, intelligent life will one day brighten these shores!"

But a closer examination of the new frontier left Chekhov disenchanted. The Russian settlers were a sweet-tempered but benighted lot, overpowered by an irremediable fatalism. According to the peasant he met at Krasnoy Yar, they were human beings only on their birth certificates, and in truth no more than flies or mosquitoes, who could neither fish nor steal nor seek for their souls, but only paint pretty toys for their children and drink themselves dead or stupid. As for the natives, they seemed to have been equal deadweights on the airlift to progress, shamanistically averse to angering water-spirits by damming floods, unwilling to offend trees by felling them. The new cities Chekhov inspected were already weary with a restless torpor and offered nothing in the way of culture but filthy public baths for the family, a bordello, a few wretched tea houses. Curiously, Chekhov summed up in his lament what was to prove an abiding featuring of the New Siberia. Raw without vitality, raddled without experience, Siberian cities don't grow, they shoot up and then rot.

2. *Novosibirsk*

After five days of seeing only sodden birch punctuated by sacked granaries turned to watchtowers, we reached the outskirts of Novosibirsk, the capital of Siberia—the *Paris* of Siberia, they call it—and a city of one-and-a-half million.

Having worked ourselves up for some Las Vegas of the Taiga, we could not but be disappointed by what was unearthed before us—not a new frontier at all, but a ducking into the horsepond of Old Russia. Novosibirsk has undergone a succession of gamey if somewhat spectral half-lives. It was delivered by slave labor, a dropping of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. From being another whistlestop for convicts, the town experienced a brief skirmish with gentility around the turn of the century. In the 1914 *Baedeker*, Novonikolaevsk is mentioned as a resort where sportsmen can lodge before plunging into the Altai Mountains in pursuit of ibex and wapiti.

At the outbreak of World War II, the city suffered a second heavy-metal baptism, serving simultaneously as an evacuation site for the industries of civilized Russia, as an open hospital for wounded soldiers, and as a transit prison whose inmates could be seen in the open trenches of the city's main boulevards, engaged in a program of massive construction. This cementing of human devastation and technological triumph determined the city's character to come.

The chief jewel of the war effort was the Novosibirsk Opera House, which characteristically was conceived as a Palace of Science and then changed its mind. In Mexico, there is a rasher of municipal buildings of a particularly indigestible floridity called Porfirian, after the dictator (Porfirio Díaz) in whose image they were cast; today, Mexicans can afford to deride the lugubrious frippery of these candy-box mausoleums of a man who kept their grandparents prisoners of want and terror. The Novosibirsk Opera House, the largest in Siberia, is built in what might be called the Josephan style: a Stalinist imitation of the Third Reich translations of imperial Rome. It is a style which in Albert Speer's hands was perhaps slyly parodic, and by its very monstrosity of scale undercut the bloated self-image it seemed to confirm.

As for this particular rehashing of the imperial theme, this magnified copy of a hyperbole, it would be funny if it did not make one angry. For what Russian could afford to be amused, look-

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ing up at this mile-high sledgehammer of Stalinism, shining example of an architecture whose aim is not only to avoid any concessions to human needs, any tributes to human aspirations, but to diminish, humiliate, and wipe them out, by so clearly aligning itself with a giant race of destroyers?

Like much of Siberia, Novosibirsk was spawned by war-Communism, and has been irremediably deformed by it. Coming to Novosibirsk in 1944, Harrison Salisbury recalls being assailed by "an endless stream of the limbless, the halt, the blind, the bandaged, and the scarred. If you wanted to see the human toll of war, Novosibirsk was the place to go in those days."

In the major cities of European Russia, the visitor is faced with a vivid allegory of the aftermath of the world war, in a boulevard pageant of wooden legs and gaudy medals. Novosibirsk, however, is something else again: evidence of the war which the Soviet Union has waged against its own people, a city of the young who have got their wounds on the battlefields of malpractice. Whether it is birth defects, or the uneradicated effects of early malnutrition, or more recent casualties of unsafe industrial conditions and drunkenness at work, Novosibirsk today is an aspic in which is preserved a wide range of disfigurements modern health care should either have prevented or have relieved without a trace.

This impression of the city as having retained something of the flavor of the hospital barracks, along with a potent shot of the medieval almshouse, sat uneasily with the Siberia Soviet officials were selling us. Our vision of an Asiastic Lourdes was countered with theirs of a boom town still wet behind the ears and bursting at its spanking new seams. Indeed there are evidences that a genuine boom did occur throughout the 60's and early 70's, but since then a blight seems to have fallen over the city. The flood of immigration has abated, the population is no longer growing rapidly but merely turning over, and the rush of construction appears to have come to a standstill.

In a 1978 copy of *National Geographic* we saw a photograph of Novosibirsk's almost completed Intourist Hotel. An Intourist Hotel is an acquisition of deep significance. In a country wholly dependent on foreign currency, yet two-thirds of which is barred to foreigners, any city that makes the tourist grade is assured a trickling of meat and butter and winter coats in the stores which the rest of the country, save the military, is denied. Yet five years after this issue of *National Geographic* had appeared, the Intourist Hotel was still the same skeleton of steel. The same held true for the Metro. According to Soviet planning, every city over a million must have a subway. The Novosibirsk Metro, which the 1978 magazine had described as nearly completed, was still a hole in the ground, and further construction seemed to have been abandoned as impractical. Our guide, like an aging beauty lopping years off her age, pretended that construction had only begun two years ago.

THE truth is that although Russia first penetrated this waste in the 16th century, it has never managed to inhabit it fully, to cultivate and industrialize the area as economic and strategic dictates would require. The causes of this failure of will are not solely climatic. It is not the land alone that is unyielding.

The active Russian workforce has consistently refused to emigrate to Siberia of its own free will. The only way the Trans-Siberian Railroad ever got built was by slave labor, and though the feat has lost something of its luster by now, it has not yet been equaled. Today, mass deportation is out of favor, and the Soviet leadership has been attempting the reclamation of Siberia with a mongrel crew of Komsomol press-gangs, military releases, and drifters attracted by high wages, short contracts, and relative freedom—you don't need a residence permit to live in the pioneer cities. These cities have remained fly-by-night company towns of extreme youth and extreme hardship, shored up with deceptive signals of luxury. Nothing grows here, so staples must be imported; the imported goods in the stores are overpriced, measly, and in fact signs not of luxury but of a truly chilling impoverishment: canned orange juice from Calcutta. For the rest, the frontier towns are characterized by raw corruption, hair-trigger violence, and rampant alcoholism (the cause given in half of all marital breakups and two-thirds of all accidents at work). Among the other strains that come with the territory, couples still often have to live in single-sex dormitories. Unsurprisingly, despite the incentives, workers can rarely be induced to renew their two- or three-year contracts, and enlistment has been flagging. These cities of the plain neither thrive nor turn to ghost towns, but sink into a callow decrepitude.

Yet the legend of a grand Siberian destiny remains. The Old Regime's progressive plans for opening up the frontiers came to fruition with the construction of the railroad, but the New Regime's business with Siberia is not yet done, and it has remained for the Soviet leadership, with its ingenious and titanic imagination, to take up the larger challenge implicit in Lomonosov's prophecy. The region is rich in raw materials and mineral resources, and the Soviet plan is to find a way of extracting and processing them on the spot: a Herculean task, which would eat up capital and labor which the Soviet Union does not possess. Nevertheless, Central Planning professes to believe in some alchemical quick fix, and as a result the combined brain power of the USSR has been diverted into cooking up some scheme that will convert the world's largest waste into the world's most productive region.

The development of Siberia is in this sense a microcosm of the larger Soviet fiction. The leader-

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ship demands the nonexistent, the nonexistent is fruitlessly sought for and, since it must be produced, invented—whereupon the fiction of actual implementation ensues: a perpetually mounting structure of deceptions, since the imaginary project's realization must be accompanied both by estimated production figures and by figures indicating a fantastical overfulfillment of the previously projected estimates. The development of Siberia, not in itself an impossible task, thus becomes a game as cynically intricate in its pretended expectations and as devastating in its totality as Democratic Kampuchea's plan to build a steel industry that would rival South Korea's by inducing its peasants to melt down their pots and pans in their back yards.

THE foundation and source of all the state's hopes for the development of Siberia is named Akademgorodok, the Science City. In 1957, under the Khrushchev enlightenment, Akademgorodok was founded on the banks of a newborn dam, some forty kilometers from Novosibirsk. It was to be a compound of some twenty-five gleaming citadels, enclosing 35,000 scientists and 7,000 understudies. United in this padded city, the army of salvation was to find a scheme that, harnessing the region's force of thermonuclear plants, hydroelectric works, and dams, would unlock Siberia's natural wealth and process it cheaply on the spot. In addition, the science city was to come up with a hundred important new agricultural developments every year to be introduced into the Soviet economy.

> In these colleges the professors contrive new rules and methods of agriculture and new instruments and tools for all trades and manufactures whereby . . . one man shall do the work of ten; a palace may be built in a week, of materials so durable as to last forever without repairing. All the fruits of the earth shall come to maturity at whatever season we think fit to choose, and increase a hundredfold more than they do at present, with innumerable other happy proposals. The only inconvenience is that none of these projects are yet brought to perfection, and in the meantime the whole country lies miserably waste, the houses in ruins and the people without food or clothes.

The writer is Jonathan Swift, in a description of the Academy of Lagado.

The Akademgorodok scheme was skunked at the outset by Central Planning's carrying-on like a sailor on payday, insisting that any such project would require a standing army of 40,000 scientists. Were such a workforce available, it would still be a terrific task to judge the correct proportions of slave labor and voluntary service necessary to fuel it. How do you get 40,000 of the country's most distinguished talents—or, for that matter, even its workhorse academics—out to Siberia, how do you get them to stay, and, while there, how do you exact their maximum creativity? Slave labor has built many of the wonders of the world, but as far as we know, it has designed few of them, and it is uncertain how much fancy brain work prisoners can be induced to yield for the state.

It is true that Andrei Nikolaievich Tupolev designed some of the Soviet Union's World War II fighter planes from a specially constructed prison-laboratory in the 30's. But would Sakharov have designed the hydrogen bomb for the Soviet Union from house-arrest in Gorky? And could a comparable feat be effected with 40,000 scientists instead of one? In any case, Central Planning decided to opt for the ungrateful task of providing material incentives that would keep this distinguished workforce, plus the 2,000 visiting academics expected every year, in permanent and willing exile.

The size of its faculty has fallen short of the state's original projections. Akademgorodok now boasts a staff of 23,000, of whom an untold number must be floorsweepers. I would be curious to know whether the quality of work has benefited by the rewards accorded it in advance, or whether the compound has knotted itself up in the professional jealousies and intrigues, the creative droughts, the internecine adulteries, that afflict other academic communities.

And of Akademgorodok's original two-pronged charter, how much has come true? Some indication of how the larger scheme has progressed can be found in Gosplan and in the Academy of Science's 1971-1990 plan which, acknowledging labor shortages and high costs, decided that it would be more practicable to transport Siberia's raw materials to be processed in the West, as had always been done in the past, than to lure people out to Siberia and build the necessary urban infrastructures. Does this mean that Novosibirsk and its satellite city are going out of business? As for this year's developments, we were relieved to hear that the Institute for Genetic Scientology had succeeded in breeding twenty-seven shades of mink. Jonathan Swift would have been proud.

We went out to Akademgorodok on a Sunday afternoon. Academic communities have certain universal features, and this once experimental and now rather shopworn compound looked much like any university setting in Wisconsin twenty years ago: the muddy lake whose drab beach was littered with gangs of female teenyboppers, faculty brats in bikinis and white flesh, carrying enormous radios; the large dilapidated white clapboard houses set in the pines, their front yards littered with children's bicycles. (Ten-room houses, these, whose equivalent floor space would house twenty-five people in Moscow; *children's* bicycles, catering to a depraved desire to have one's legs reach from seat to pedal, bicycles which the child-cyclists we observed in the rest of Siberia, standing upright on a rusty man's one-speed, would not even have rec-

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ognized, any more than they would an elephant small enough to fit in one's palm.)

It was a muggy afternoon, and the oppressiveness of the community's air of enforced Sunday idleness made Akademgorodok all the more a successful facsimile of normality. The shopping mall was crammed with families and goods. There were household goods which, although of a quality which would be both meager and unacceptably baroque by European working-class standards, were items unavailable elsewhere in the Soviet Union: orange-juice squeezers, toast racks, bread boards, and kitchen knives. There was the Soviet equivalent of the duty-free counter with imported booze and filter-tip knock-offs with names like "Stewardess" and "Ronhill" from Zagreb, Duana, and Ivornica. There was a children's department whose floor consisted entirely of spindly baby carriages and mammoth panda bears in lurid pinks and St. Patrick's Day greens. Side by side with such folly were the large tin pots which are an indicator of housing without running water.

The stores were crowded, mostly with foreigners and day-trippers from Novosibirsk who had come by bus to load up for the week. The residents were unmistakable. Whereas the working class had got up in its Sunday best—the men in dark suits, the women in beehives, and the little girls in frilly party dresses and large gauze bows in their hair—it was an academic privilege to be slatternly on a Sunday: husbands with a faint hippie gaudiness to their gloom, pushing shopping carts loaded with vermouth and washing powder, the wives colorless and hard to the touch (in Chekhov's words). The children were the only ones we saw in the Soviet Union who wore glasses.

GLEB, our city guide in Novosibirsk, was a shoddy Soviet copy of a West European type of the pampered lefty, a perpetual student, something of a swinger: rose-tinted aviator shades, pallid hair tightly crimped around a pasty face, and a beer belly billowing over the confines of his bleached jeans. Too old and well-paid to be alienated, he had an air of unrelieved boredom and cynicism that was exaggerated by an Americanistic accent that twanged like a jew's-harp. Gleb was patently drunk. When we remarked upon his wonderful mid-afternoon drunkenness, Nadezhda did not miss a beat. "Oh yes, there was a girl in the Beriozhka shop whose birthday it was today. No doubt there was some champagne at lunch." The cover was so instantaneous it might have been an Intourist stock response.

Also, Gleb knew nothing. Any questions out of the ordinary he fielded to the driver, in a flagrant breach of Intourist decorum. Always, once out of the major tourist centers, there is a sweet collusion between driver and guide: like a pair of good cops, they work together under high pressure. Both are finely trained and fluent in the tourist's tongue, but neither lets on that they have ever met before; one gets to be the know-it-all, while the other is invariably silent and pretends to know no English. I wondered if they ever traded off. Throughout our trip, our attempts to trick various drivers into answering had been duds. I was beginning to feel like Gogol's madman clerk, sneaking up on lapdogs to catch them in human conversation, when at last our efforts were amply rewarded in Petya, Gleb's sidekick. Petya was a speed demon. Barreling down an empty highway on our way to the airport, he managed to break the van—a Hungarian make appropriately called "Ikarus." When I got out and wandered over to the side of the road, Petya came up to me, holding up a long piece of frazzled World War II tubing. "Don't worry," he said genially in English. "Just relax, relax."

OFFICIAL Soviet tours are interesting for their tension between what they wish to show you and what is inadvertently revealed. A massive attempt on the scale of a perpetual war effort is made to maintain a facsimile of normality —a moving picture of normality, one might say, since normality entails progress, or at least change. The strain of this war effort is so costly that the state can only afford to Potemkinize one-third of its cities, leaving the rest on the dark side of the moon.

We got a feel for the incidental tolls tourism takes, in seeing our guide Nadezhda come down to breakfast every morning with increasingly black circles under her eyes and realizing that in addition to our daily airplane flight, the city tour, the academic meeting, the visit to the Palace of Economic Achievement, and the evening's circus, she had to write back to Moscow a nightly report on all we had said and done that day. And on top of that, there were the oral reports delivered daily to the local police bureau. We sometimes saw her being led away by these bully boys while we were taken off by the local guide: Nadezhda would give us a snappish or at times an anxiously demonstrative farewell, as if she might never be seeing us again.

Now Intourist guides are their country's domestic ambassadors, drawn from a small and privileged elite, and as such only peripheral casualties of the war effort to make the Soviet Union look like its leadership's received notions of what a great power ought to look like. What was arresting was the frequency with which hideous discrepancies in the illusion not only occurred but went unnoticed by our guides, because Russian vision is too incurably skewed to recognize what could seem unusual or even shocking to Western eyes.

This alienness is something that has struck foreign visitors since the first Englishman touring Muscovy in the 16th century judged its natives more barbarous than the Irish, and the Russian people themselves, in fluctuations of pride and shame, seem to have been no less firmly convinced of their alienness from the rest of humanity. In the

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last century, the Russian elite was schooled abroad, imported its outlook, and acquired a gentlemanly sameness of surface. Today, when national distinctions have been further homogenized by ease of transport and communication, the Soviet Union has jammed its own airwaves from the West. By now ordinary Russians can have only a limited notion of what a democracy tastes or smells like, and you must constantly remind yourself that as eminent a figure as Andropov has never set foot on non-Communist soil. Where could he have acquired his tastes for Glenn Miller and imported Scotch, if indeed they are Andropov's tastes and not, as seems more likely, the softening touch of the state portraitist? Only by confiscation, from having "overseen" American cargo shipped into Murmansk during the lend-lease program.

Leninism conceives of no life beyond the scorched earth on which socialism is to be built. With no palpable ideals and little understanding of the opposition's, the current leaders of the Soviet state find themselves unable to flesh out their skeleton formulations with any alternative reality half so full-bodied, so various, and so beguiling as that of Western democracy. Is there such a thing as belief in the leadership among the people, we asked a Soviet dissident in the United States. He smiled. "The Russian people cannot cease to feel important and proud when they remember, as they do at least once a day, that, useless hulks that they are, they have nevertheless managed to spread themselves across one-sixth of the earth's surface."

We were in a dance palace in Novosibirsk on a Saturday night. Swarming outside the multistoried mammoth of marble and concrete, in the lobby, and on the broad staircase leading up to the main dining room and dance floor was a throng of cheap hustlers, undercover agents, smugglers, army officers, reeling Mongol tribesmen, and young boys puking drunk. Deals were being cut, bottles of liquor passed surreptitiously, brawls, and amorous lunges.

Inside, we stood leaning over the railings of a minstrel's gallery, staring down at the dance floor. There was a tribe of Uzbek marketeers, whose women got up and danced by themselves with a lot of heel-clicking and snapping of the fingers to a rock-and-roll at once self-pitying and salacious. The men, much older and shorter, squat toughies with stick-out ears and bronzed pugnacious faces like arrowheads, came up to them for an instant, eyed them with contempt, and strutted off to get more booze. There was a subdued wedding party, the groom very young and drunk, and seemingly sunk in misgivings. A small solitary war hero with a crewcut and pale idiot leer sidled up to the party and began to sing them a cracked love song of an unbelievable melancholy. There was a prematurely bald army officer dining with a red-haired tart he had never met before but was extremely anxious to be liked by, and he got increasingly anxious as her eyes darted about the room searching out relief. There was a blond brick-faced air-force officer seated with a table of henchmen, whom we watched work his way silently and coldly through soup, two cutlets, potatoes, peas, and a bottle of vodka. The henchmen neither ate nor drank.

I watched this spectacle and I thought of such a people expanding across the earth's surface, colonizing the civilized nations of the world. And I thought of Edouard Goldstücker, a Czech Communist and one-time apologist for the Soviet regime, who on seeing a man come out of a Moscow liquor shop, down a vodka bottle at one go, and walk straight into a lamppost cutting his head open, realized that he could no longer blame such everyday sights on vestiges of an Old Russia the infant state had yet to cast off: "This was not czarism anymore; it was the great tragedy which had happened to us in Central Europe. We became dominated by a regime which is historically backward, much more backward than we are. This had very rarely happened in history that the colonizing power was historically backward compared to the colonized."

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Breaking with the Communists—A Memoir

Sidney Hook

W. H. Auden, who was one of the important figures in giving a revolutionary tone and orientation to the 1930's, characterized it, after it was over, as "a low, dishonest decade." Probably his chief reason for doing so was the acute contradiction between the ideals and aspirations of its spokesmen and their hypocritical judgments on, and silence about, the domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The outstanding personalities and organizations that shouted "frameup" at the time of the Reichstag Fire Trials in Berlin nevertheless endorsed the Moscow Trials only a few years later on the strength of the unsubstantiated confessions of the men in the dock. The same eloquent revolutionary idealists, while calling for a boycott of trade with Italy after Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, of Japan after its invasion of Manchuria, of Germany after Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland, nevertheless remained silent about the sale of oil, coal, and other materials by the Soviet Union to Italy, Japan, and Germany. Carried to the heights of their revolutionary idealism in the defense of the Spanish Republic against fascist aggression, they nevertheless countenanced and, on the whole, approved of the extermination by the GPU of anti-Stalinist elements among the pro-Republican forces.

All this, of course, was part of the background. In the forefront were the domestic scene and the succession of issues that arose as unemployment mounted, want and deprivation bit more deeply into the consciousness of American citizens, and as the measures of the New Deal, fitfully developed to meet the crisis, resulted in uncertainty.

The intellectuals who supported Roosevelt and the New Deal, drawn from Harvard and Columbia, were for the most part clustered in Washington. Since they were largely engaged in the pragmatic and piecemeal resolution of problems that arose from the necessity of getting production started again and of relieving most of the difficulties of maldistribution, there was little time or even interest in elaborating a comprehensive philosophy of the New Deal that could serve as an alternative unifying faith to socialism or Communism. Most intellectuals who became interested in the social question were in quest of a philosophy that would transform the status quo, not realizing that the measures and reforms of the New Deal, which they contemptuously dismissed as halfway steps, poultices, band-aids, were doing precisely that. The status quo was changing before their very eyes, but not visibly enough to assuage their revolutionary impatience.

The vast majority of radical intellectuals in the 30's were not revolutionary simpletons, but they did not act like intellectuals. It was not that they did not think. It was that they refused to think about the central articles of their faith. They had unmeasured contempt for intellectuals like Paul Elmer More or Irving Babbitt or the Southern Agrarians who served as poets laureate of the capitalist system or of the class- and caste-ridden societies of the past. But the radical intellectuals had no hesitation in serving as the poets laureate of the socialist future and—what was more blameworthy—of the Soviet Union, which they saw in the rosy hues of the many-splendored fictions retailed by returning pilgrims from the international fatherland of the workers, peasants, and thinkers of the world.

I cannot absolve myself of the failure to exercise critical responsibility toward my own socialist ideals and beliefs in the same way my teachers—Morris Raphael Cohen, John Dewey, and Bertrand Russell, who were sympathetic to those ideals on ethical grounds—did at the time. I was guilty of judging capitalism by its operations and socialism by its hopes and aspirations; capitalism by its works and socialism by its literature. To this day, the same error and its disastrous consequences are observable in the judgment and behavior of individuals who, obsessed by the genuine shortcomings of the welfare state at home or abroad, opt for one of the varieties of totalitarian Communism.

In my own case—and to a greater or lesser degree for an indeterminate number of other individuals who were influenced

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by my thinking—three reasons explain but do not justify this elementary but massive error. First, there was my genuine ignorance of what was really occurring within the Soviet Union. Perhaps this was exacerbated by a reluctance to find out. I am profoundly convinced that had I known in the late 20's or early 30's what I definitely knew in the mid-30's, I would not so easily have succumbed to this fallacious outlook.

There had been so many lies and hostile stories coming out of Russia during the early years of the Revolution that it was hard to distinguish between an atrocity tale and the damaging truth. And on the other side there was Walter Duranty writing apologias for Stalin's terror against the peasantry in the guise of news reports in the august pages of the New York *Times*; he even denied there was famine in the Ukraine.* There were as well glowing reports from a stream of pilgrims to the Red Mecca who had been herded from one Potemkin village to another in every area of their interest—public health, social welfare, education—by skillful party operators. Initially, even hard-headed liberals like John Dewey and George Counts were taken in.

Once we glimpsed the truth we began to see things in better perspective. I recall a memorable conversation with Albert Goldman, Leon Trotsky's attorney at the Dewey Commission Hearings on the Moscow Trials in Mexico City, which explains his later excommunication from the Trotskyist movement: "If I could be assured that our present capitalistic welfare system would not get worse, I would infinitely prefer it to any socialist system resembling the Soviet Union."

Goldman's remark points toward the second reason. All of us still lived in the shadow of World War I which even the conventional historians interpreted as a consequence of the imperialist conflicts of the capitalist economy. We assumed that capitalism must expand or collapse; and expansion, sooner or later, would lead to war. It was indeed the horrors of World War I and the revulsion they inspired that prevented the Western powers from "strangling Bolshevism in its cradle" by military action, as Winston Churchill had urged at the time. And we revolutionary socialists often would discount the agonies and the loss of life resulting from the October Revolution by contrasting them with the much greater costs of the war.

The third reason played a particular role in my own political obtuseness. My Guggenheim year in Germany in 1928-29 had convinced me that a nationalist revival to overturn the Treaty of Versailles and its perceived injustices would soon sweep over Germany, and in 1930, when Hitler's National Socialist party went from 12 to 114 seats in the Reichstag, I felt vindicated in my judgment and fears. Now, a victory by Hitler spelled, according to his own program of action, war against the Soviet Union. I therefore assumed that the Kremlin, in its own interests and that of the international working class, as well as in the cause of humanity, would organize, through its powerful Communist political and trade-union affiliates in Germany, a revolution either to forestall a fascist victory and war if Hitler attempted a *Putsch* or to overthrow him in the unlikely event that he would come legally or peacefully into power. It seemed to me axiomatic that the Soviet Union could not permit the forces of fascism to triumph in Germany.

The fear of fascism helped to blur my vision and blunt my hearing when it came to the reports of oppression that kept trickling out of the Soviet Union. It was certainly a well-justified fear. But it was rooted in a vulgar Marxist simplification of the nature of fascism that blinded me to the source of its strength, that is to say, to its mass base.

The simplification was that fascism was the dictatorship of finance capitalism, the final phase of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, to which the only viable alternative was the dictatorship of the proletariat. In its desperate defense of private property, fascism was prepared to destroy all the distinctive liberal values of Western civilization and return society to the culture of barbarism. Lenin had said it. Stalin repeated it in dull prose. Trotsky elaborated on it with brilliant pyrotechnical rhetoric. Every faction of the Communist movement—Left, Right, Center—adhered to it. Most socialist thinkers, with rare exceptions like Hilferding, followed suit. Even independent Marxists like James Burnham, who would later become a leading Trotskyist (and still later, a *National Review* conservative), but who at the time kept his distance from the strife of factions, accepted this analysis. Thus in the *Nation* (October 3, 1934) Burnham wrote: "Hitler is no Teutonic accident. He is the cultural price we pay for the preservation of private property."

THESE, then, were the reasons why, until Hitler came to power in Germany, I became a fellow-traveler of the Communist movement. I did not join the Communist party because (among other things) it seemed to me insufficiently Marxist both in its slogans and its practices. Thus, working from the outside, I set out to expound and apply Marxist principles to the theoretical and practical problems of the day in a manner designed to appeal to intelligent persons who had not lost their critical sensibilities. At the same time I began an uneasy and more or less stormy collaboration with the front and peripheral organizations of the Communist movement in hopes of influencing its thinking and knowledge of Marxism until such time as its practices changed.

* See "The Famine the *Times* Couldn't Find" by Marco Carynnyk (COMMENTARY, November 1983)—ED.

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I was then working on the book that would be published both in the United States and England under the title *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*. What I tried to do there was to go beyond the tired propaganda slogans and analyses of the agitprop division of the Communist party, to stress the continuity between Marx's contributions and the intellectual tradition of the West, and to bring to a higher intellectual level the challenge of a democratic collectivist society to the capitalist order. I did not compromise on any theoretical point on which I thought Marx, Engels, or Lenin was wrong, confident in my naiveté that these criticisms would be taken in the context of my reinterpretation of Marxism as a fulfillment of the ideals of democracy as a way of life. (Max Eastman reviewed one of my later books under the sardonic title, "What Karl Marx Would Have Said If He Had Been a Student of John Dewey.")

I did refrain in *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* from criticizing certain unhealthy developments in the Soviet Union, realizing already then that I could get no hearing for my views among those I was trying to influence if I were to identify myself with any of the currently warring political factions. It did not seem to me in principle impossible to develop a kind of Americanized Marxism strengthened by John Dewey's activist theory of mind and knowledge, as well as his philosophy of education and naturalistic humanism, that would be consonant with the American revolutionary tradition.

When *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx* appeared in 1933, it had less of an impact on the Communist movement than on American intellectual life and less on American intellectual life than on English intellectual life. Bertrand Russell, in a letter to V.F. Calverton dated July 14, 1933 from Deudraeth Castle Hotel, wrote: "Please remember me to Sidney Hook, whose book on Marx seems to be having a great success." I heard in subsequent years that the book played an important role in drawing Oxford and Cambridge students into the Communist movement. It also converted many leading intellectuals—or strongly confirmed them in their leanings—to a revolutionary-socialist standpoint; and many of these would remain within the Communist organizations and their periphery after I myself had decisively broken with them. One such, John Strachey, wrote me enthusiastically about the book (though he would later change his mind upon learning during a visit to the United States that I had become openly critical of the Kremlin).

DURING the late 20's and early 30's I got to know several important members of the Communist party—notably the writers Joseph Freeman and Michael Gold. I also did some editorial work for A.L. Trachtenberg, the head of the party's publishing house, International Publishers. V.J. Jerome, who served as a sort of cultural commissar for the party, had sat in on the philosophy courses I was teaching at New York University. Felix Morrow (later to become a Trotskyist and an important publisher) and William Phillips (the future editor of *Partisan Review*) were also students of mine at NYU. Morrow had some connection with the *Menorah Journal*, the Jewish cultural periodical edited by Henry Hurwitz, and through him I met Herbert Solow who, it turned out, was actually a neighbor of mine in Brooklyn Heights. In consequence our friendship ripened.

When I first encountered him in 1929, Herbert Solow was no revolutionary socialist but a militant liberal of the school of Charles Beard. In the course of a year, the devastating effects of the Depression reinforced the strength of my arguments, and he became a Marxist, and then a Communist sympathizer. But he soon contracted a severe case of what Lenin called "infantile leftism" from which he never completely recovered until he abandoned revolutionary politics.

Solow was a brilliant journalist with enormous gifts for analysis, research, and ferreting out connections. He performed invaluable services later in the field working with left-wing trade unions, and at the time of the Moscow Trials. He would have made a marvelous detective or a prosecuting attorney. In those days, he tended to think geometrically about politics, and his absolute moral integrity sometimes impressed his friends and associates as an expression of moral self-righteousness. The ambiguities of political maneuver appeared to him to be needless hyprocrisy. Burdened with a choleric temper that was sometimes followed by deep depression, he could occasionally be an embarrassment, even a liability, in the attempt to counteract and influence the Communist-party line. He would curse me out as a centrist, but aware of his own incapacity for leadership, he offered to be my "lieutenant"—the word was his—in the campaign to de-Stalinize the Communist movement.

Our relationship, even when friendly, was stormy because he soon swallowed the entire Trotskyist line, which I could never buy, as much as I admired Trotsky's gifts and sympathized with his plight. Solow was prepared to devote his life to the career of a professional revolutionist and expected his friends to do so, too, if they were in political agreement with him. He was a man of many parts who never reached the high level of achievement he was capable of.

It was Solow who was chiefly responsible for moving the group of writers loosely associated with the *Menorah Journal* to the Left. Elliot Cohen, the young managing editor (who in 1945 would become the first editor of COMMENTARY), always followed Solow, though at a distance and protestingly, and between them they were able to influence the gifted men and women (including Lionel Trilling and Tess Slesinger) whose

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contributions had made the *Menorah Journal* a magazine of broad cultural appeal.*

I had previously met Cohen through Morrow, but in the beginning we did not hit it off. He had commissioned an article-review from me of Waldo Frank's *Our America*—an overblown mystical panegyric—but refused to print it on the ground that it was too critical (he was then wooing Frank to write regularly for the *Menorah Journal*).

My relations with Cohen were further strained by the unhappy outcome of a meeting of contributors, staff, and invited guests at the *Menorah* offices at which one of the leading figures of the Zionist movement, Shmarya Levin, gave a fiery address (in German). This was in the late spring of 1930. With memories of the Arab excesses against the Jews in the previous year still fresh in my mind, I mildly interposed a question about the difficulties in Arab-Jewish relations. Levin blew up, denounced me in unflattering terms, and spoiled the evening as well as his own effect on the audience. Oddly enough, Cohen but not Hurwitz held me accountable. At the time I knew very little about Jewish affairs. Since my standpoint was close to that of the Jewish Bund, I was not a political Zionist but was sympathetic to the idea of a bicultural community along the lines envisaged by Judah Magnes—an idea whose utterly utopian character I did not appreciate until later.

In consequence of Solow's extraordinary influence over Cohen (they seemed to be always quarreling and always making up), our personal dislikes faded in our common political orientation, though it was not until the 40's that Cohen and I actually became friendly. Looking back now, I suspect that he resented my political influence over Solow whose tantrums, although unpleasant, I did not take as seriously as he did.

Cohen was a person of great insight into the nature of popular culture—a talker rather than a writer, whose ideas anticipated the discoveries of major sociologists of a later generation. He was a neophyte in radical politics and did not easily brook contradiction. But he was no dogmatist, and regardless of the vehemence and uncomplimentary language with which he tended to express disagreement, he was not loath to change his mind. There was one rather endearing but sometimes startling habit he had. Half-a-dozen times during the years I knew him, I was awakened during the night or early morning by telegrams that began: "You were right! I was wrong!"

IT WAS not only in the Solow-Elliot Cohen circle that I found political allies. There were also others as diverse in background as Lewis Corey and James Rorty. Corey, born Louis Fraina, was an old professional revolutionist, who, legend had it, was called "the first American Bolshevik" by Lenin himself. After helping to organize the American Communist party in 1919, he became the victim of a Communist intrigue that charged him with being an American agent. Making his way to Moscow, he was not only cleared but entrusted with a commission by the Communist International (Comintern). He then disappeared. Under his new name he surfaced in 1928 as an assistant editor of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, of which Edwin Seligman of Columbia University was editor-in-chief, and Alvin Johnson of the New School was managing editor. Herbert Solow was also an assistant editor, and as soon as I disclosed Corey's real identity to him, he questioned Corey about his past. For a while Corey and I bandied messages to each other through Solow; but Solow and I never learned the real truth about the funds—whose size grew with each retelling—with which the Communist International had entrusted Corey to bring the revolutionary gospel to America.

Lewis Corey was in many ways a remarkable man. An autodidact, he learned enough about Marx and economics to hold his own with conventional academic economists. Despite a speech defect, he became a skillful orator whose intensity of conviction was communicated to his audiences no matter what the subject. He was even able to keep an audience interested when it didn't know what he was talking about. Most impressive of all, he was prepared and able to test his first principles or dogmas in the light of experience. He was the first outstanding Marxist to recognize that the rise of the democratic welfare state had made Marx's writings largely irrelevant to the understanding of our modern economy.

Corey, however, had one marked intellectual defect. He was completely devoid of a sense of humor and without the saving grace of any awareness of its absence. He recognized what I was trying to do, was extremely helpful, and sensible enough to steer clear of any Trotskyist entanglements. Yet unbeknownst to me at the time, he was still Bolshevik enough to be in close touch with, if not a secret member of, the dissident Communist faction led by Jay Lovestone, whose doctrine of American exceptionalism made more sense then than any other in the field.

James Rorty was by profession a journalist but at heart he was a poet. He had a love for the soil and the natural life, and long before the environmentalist movement was born, he held forth against the evils of pollution and the dangers of the use of chemicals and preservatives in the nation's food supply. In those days we thought this was a quaint, lovable aberration. He joined Solow and me not so much on the strength of any theoretical economic, political, or philosophical doctrines but on the basis of everyday issues that

* See "Young in the Thirties" by Lionel Trilling (COMMENTARY, May 1966) and "Epitaph for a Jewish Magazine: Notes on the *Menorah Journal*" by Robert Alter (COMMENTARY, May 1965)—ED.

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arose, following the lead of his common sense and inherent moral decency.

THE chief battleground in our conflict with the Communist party was the League of Professional Groups. This organization was an outgrowth of the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford, which had been organized during the 1932 presidential campaign of Communist candidates William Z. Foster and John W. Ford, hard on the declaration of more than fifty leading intellectuals expressing support of the Communist-party ticket as a protest against the chaos and misery around them. Among the fifty signers were Sherwood Anderson, Newton Arvin, Lewis Corey, Malcolm Cowley, John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, Granville Hicks, Langston Hughes, Matthew Josephson, Lincoln Steffens, and Edmund Wilson. (I also signed, but I dissuaded several other friends who were willing to sign from doing so because it would have exposed them to dangerous sanctions which, in accordance with traditional practices in the U.S., we expected to be taken against them.)

During the campaign, the practical activities of the League were not conducive to raising difficulties about Communist theory and overall strategy and tactics. Capitalism was the common enemy. I was also rather apprehensive that my incautious agreement to serve as treasurer of the Committee to Help Deported and Exiled Old Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union might give color to the suspicion that we were raising difficulties from a factional point of view.

This had come about when, a year earlier, someone calling himself B.G. Field had visited me as an emissary from Leon Trotsky with a moving tale of the hardships being experienced by his followers in the exiled wastes of the Soviet Union. On humanitarian grounds I consented to serve. Only the tip of the iceberg of Stalinist terror was visible to us at that point, and our printed appeal brought a modest response from all elements of the liberal and radical community.

It is significant that none of us was struck by the fact that, at the very time the Kremlin, through its front organizations headed by "honest liberals," was circulating clemency petitions for its operatives in China, Switzerland, Hungary, and other countries where they had run afoul of the existing regimes, Stalin's treatment of loyal dissenters, not to speak of those genuinely in opposition, was hardly different. Indeed, the chief difference, it turned out, was that whereas in non-Communist countries humanitarian petitions often led to the commutation or reduction of the sentences of Communists, such humanitarian appeals had no comparable effect on the Kremlin's treatment of its own political nonconformists.

The one indisputable achievement of the American Communist party in this period was in helping to save the lives of the defendants in the Scottsboro case, nine young blacks who had been unjustly accused of raping two white girls and had been originally sentenced to death or life imprisonment. But the way the Communists fought the case often subordinated the interests of the defendants to opportunities to make political propaganda for the party and the Soviet Union, thus alienating influential sections of the middle classes as well as many clergymen who would have responded strongly to a straightforward appeal based on the merits of the case. The Communist leader Earl Browder was once chided for using a notorious and unsavory criminal lawyer, who had represented some of the most repulsive gangsters of the period, to appeal the Scottsboro convictions when much more distinguished and reputable attorneys were able and willing to do so. Browder replied that by using the most discredited members of the American bar, he was showing his contempt for the system of American justice.

Our collaboration with the Communist-party stalwarts in the League of Professional Groups for Foster and Ford was not marred by open criticism while the 1932 presidential campaign was in progress. We were uncomfortable at being trotted out as celebrities at mass meetings and distressed at the low level of the propaganda spouted by the party intellectuals and officials. But we performed our assigned tasks loyally and effectively. Whatever dissatisfaction we had was voiced to individuals whom we deemed sufficiently independent not to be carried away by the emotion of herd enthusiasm or overwhelmed by awe of the party's authority. In his book, *Infidel in the Temple*, Matthew Josephson, usually an unreliable witness, relates an incident that I do not recall in which, strolling together after one of these successful meetings, I "burst forth in a sudden tirade against the 'stupid leadership' of the Communist party." It is not likely that I would have unburdened myself to him at that time since it was obvious that anything said to him would be reported to Malcolm Cowley who, although not a member of the Communist party, was working hand-in-glove with the party faction in the League.

Instead of voicing our criticisms, what our group sought to do was reformulate the revolutionary position in such a way as to avoid Communist-party jargon and make it continuous with the authentic American revolutionary tradition. We failed miserably. The pamphlet, *Culture and the Crisis*, which was published in the name of the League was a pastiche of many hands—Corey, Cowley, Rorty, Josephson, myself, and one or two others. The end product was edited by the party regulars. Except for some introductory pages, a vivid and colorful account of the crisis, and some original characterizations of the Republican and Democratic parties, it read like a typical Communist document, particularly in its political section, full of Communist clichés. I had written fervently about workers' democracy and about Communism

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as a fulfillment of the liberal ideals of Western civilization, but all this was deleted by the invisible hands that saw the manuscript through the press.

MEANWHILE I made a horrifying and embarrassing discovery. After *Culture and the Crisis* was published to explain why the intellectuals were supporting the candidacy of Foster and Ford, I read Foster's book, *Towards Soviet America*. It was the crudest piece of propaganda which, if attention had been called to it, would have undone the work of a million slick pamphlets describing Communism as the latest phase in the development of the Jeffersonian revolutionary tradition. I am confident that none of the other members of the League had read the book, and I doubt that many would have publicly identified themselves with its key positions had they been challenged to affirm them. For on page 275 Foster declared:

> Even before the seizure of power, the workers will organize the Red Guard . . . The leader of the Revolution in all its stages is the Communist party. . . . Under the dictatorship, all the Capitalist parties—Republican, Democratic, Progressive, Socialist, etc.—will be liquidated, the Communist party alone functioning as the party of the toiling masses. Likewise will be dissolved all other organizations that are political props of all bourgeois rule, including chambers of commerce, employers' associations, Rotary Clubs, American Legion, YMCA, and such fraternal orders as the Masons, Odd Fellows, Elks, Knights of Columbus, etc.

This was far more than the intellectuals who had signed the open letter had bargained for. It would have been too much even for Matthew Josephson, who disingenuously pleads thirty years later that support of the Communist electoral ticket was only a protest. It was much more than a protest, since it endorsed the party program. On the other hand, the intellectuals certainly never conceived the party program in this way. Among the ostensible reasons they were calling upon their fellow citizens to cast a protest vote for the Communist ticket was their fear of fascism at home and abroad. Yet Foster's bloodthirsty account of what the Communists would do after "the seizure" (*sic*) of power sounded like a preview of a fascist takeover. Indeed, at the time it was even more extreme than the Nazi account of the proposed road to political power, since Hitler was swearing that he would avoid a coup d'état and come to power legally.

Fortunately for the fifty-two or so intellectuals who signed the original letter, the "capitalist press" missed the passage. But reading *Towards Soviet America* reinforced my feeling that the American Communist party, even when led by an indigenous American like Foster, was incapable of reorienting its thinking to the historic conditions and traditions of the country it inhabited. In order to ingratiate themselves with the Kremlin, the American Communists were aping the most extreme aspects of what they fancied the Bolshevik program was during the darkest days of the Russian civil war. (I did not realize until later that the chief fault lay not so much with the stupidities of the American leaders, of which there was abundant evidence, as with those in the Kremlin who appointed them.)

Some may be surprised at my judgment that Foster's description of the way the Communist party planned to achieve a Soviet America would have shocked "the cream of the American intellectuals," as Browder once referred to them, into political sobriety. After all, had they not opted for revolutionary Marxism? Had they not rejected socialism and the Socialist party as unviable?

True, but in rejecting socialism they did not mean to reject democracy; what they were rejecting was the timidity of the Socialists who when in power abandoned their own programs of social reform. This was how the Social Democratic movement in Germany was judged. The actual domestic experience of force and violence, especially in areas where unions were being organized, convinced intellectuals that it was the law-enforcement agencies of the country, national and local, that were more often guilty of illegal violence than the workers or farmers. The assumption was widespread that fascism as an organized illegal movement to nullify any gains won by the workers was an imminent danger in the United States. This assumption was shared by reputable liberal thinkers who would have nothing to do with the signers of the League's statement. Those who signed were convinced, mistakenly as it turned out, that the liberal philosophy was inadequate to cope with the danger.

AT ANY rate, after the campaign was over and the League of Professional Groups continued with a series of meetings and educational open forums, we began to make our criticisms more vocal. After a while, the Communist-party fraction and its allies were prepared for us—not with argument but with epithets, jeers, and voting majorities. I distinctly recall three meetings. At one we attacked the theory of social-fascism (according to which non-Communist groups on the Left were "objectively" indistinguishable from fascism) and its pernicious consequences for a genuine united front to resist the growth of fascism; at the second, we took on the theory and practice of dual trade unionism (which called for the setting up of rival unions by the Communists when they were unable to control existing unions in a given industry); at the third we devoted ourselves to the Communist party's program of "self-determination for the Black Belt."

The most vehement criticisms of our position came not from the party fraction but from the staunch fellow-travelers Malcolm Cowley and Kyle

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Crichton. Since Trotsky, from his own point of view, had written critically of the theory of social-fascism, we were attacked as "Trotskyites," and our retort, "Even Trotsky can sometimes be right," was, despite our denials, taken as proof positive of the truth of the allegations against us. Actually, criticisms of the doctrine of social-fascism were common coin among all radical groups outside the Communist party, and it was Lewis Corey who was most eloquent in exposing the fatuities of the position.

I myself led the assault against the practice of dual trade unionism. Even admitting the necessity of bringing home to the workers the realization that every industrial struggle was a political struggle, I argued that ideological divisions among workers in the same craft or industry weakened their bargaining ability and enabled employers to pit one union against another, sometimes resulting in strike-breaking. I recall that it was during this discussion that Cowley turned on me with the indignant question: "Who are *you* to disagree with William Foster over trade unionism?"

As for "self-determination for the Black Belt"—including, no less, the right of secession from the United States—this slogan had been imposed on the American Communist party by the Comintern. The reasoning was that since the blacks were a minority, and since national minorities in the Soviet Union had (on paper) the right to self-determination, the same demand must be raised on behalf of the blacks in the United States. But, as we argued, in the American context such a proposal was not only a call for a Jim Crow program and a segregated culture; if taken seriously, it would obstruct efforts to organize black sharecroppers and to unite Negroes and whites in the South in civil-rights cases.

The fact that the American party leadership was prepared to accept this utterly irresponsible proposal for "solving" the black problem in the United States without demurring was a measure of its slavishness to the Kremlin. It was as if they had no roots in or knowledge of the American society they wanted to transform. The Soviets had the excuse of ignorance. I remember once being asked by the pundits of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow where I was doing research, "What language do the Negroes speak?" and their initial incredulity when I replied "English." Since the Soviet minorities had their own tongue, the American Negroes must have one too.

IT WAS not long before the rift between the Communist party and our group widened into a gulf and then became an unbridgeable abyss. The Communist leaders were fearful that we would infect the literary lions who graced their other front organizations, and began systematic campaigns of denigration against us. Subsequently I learned that the Communist command was fearful that we would organize a new political party. They were apparently haunted by an article Edmund Wilson (a member of the League and sympathetic to our group) had published in the *New Republic* in 1931 in which he wrote: "I believe that if the American radicals and progressives who repudiate the Marxian dogma and the strategy of the Communist party hope to accomplish anything valuable, they must take Communism away from the Communists, and take it without ambiguities or reservations." Thus, when the American Workers party was founded in January 1934, the Communist-party leadership felt confirmed in its suspicions that this had been our deep design from the outset of our collaboration. They were wrong, as usual. But that is another story.

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German Culture and the Jews

Jacob Katz

"Jews have not assimilated into 'the German people,' but into a certain layer of it, the newly emerged middle class." This sentence from my doctoral dissertation, written almost half a century ago, has been quoted by my fellow scholars from time to time, and others have come up with similar conclusions on the basis of their own observations. My own purpose in quoting the sentence now, however, is to qualify it, for I have since come to believe, after further inquiry into the historical process known as assimilation, that notwithstanding the experience of certain individuals, the entry of Jewry as a *collective* into the body of German society, a process which began in the later 18th and early 19th century, did not mean real integration into any stratum or section of it. Rather, it meant the creation of a separate subgroup, which happened to conform to the German middle class in certain of its characteristics.

Negatively speaking, German Jewry, like the German middle class, belonged neither to the landed aristocracy, nor to the peasantry, nor for that matter to the proletariat. Its economic function corresponded to that of the middle class, but it was not identical with it. Jews were not distributed across the whole range of middle-class professions and occupations, but remained concentrated instead in certain specific pursuits, so that even economically they were a conspicuous subgroup. The most convincing proof of Jewish separateness, however, was the habit Jews had of marrying only among themselves. Some intermarriage with members of the surrounding society did take place, but those who intermarried almost always dropped out of the Jewish community, while it was only in exceptional cases that the non-Jewish partner became integrated into Jewish society. As far as actual and active kinship was concerned, Jews remained almost exclusively bound to their own kind—a fact that more conspicuously than any other set them apart from the population at large.

It is true that German Jews did absorb the basic elements of culture from the surrounding society, and this within a relatively brief transition period lasting no more than two or three generations. By the mid-19th century, owing mainly to having attended German schools, German Jews had acquired the basic elements of what the Germans call *Bildung* (education); that is, they were conversant with, and affected by, the same elements of German culture that had shaped the minds of their counterparts in German society. One could see this as a kind of assimilation, perhaps, but only in a special sense. For despite the fact that German Jews were exposed to the same cultural experience as the rest of the German middle class, even within this limited sphere they did not exhibit identical or even similar patterns of behavior. Jewish cultural behavior continued to reflect the distinctive and distinguishable circumstances of German Jewry as a whole.

The major difference, when it came to cultural behavior, was quantitative. Jews were more intensely involved in the cultivation of their *Bildung* than were their Gentile counterparts. They were more avid readers of literature, they frequented theaters and concert halls in numbers far disproportionate to their presence in the population, and they were similarly overrepresented in most other cultural activities. While there are no statistical data to bear out this contention, it has been remarked upon so often by those involved in cultural matters as to be beyond dispute. The unusual responsiveness of the Jewish audience—and particularly its female contingent—was already evident in connection with the figure of Goethe, and was remarked upon by Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer, a close friend of the poet:

> The educated among them [the Jews] were on the whole more obliging and steady in the veneration of his person as well as his writings than many of his co-religionists. They do reveal in general more pleasing attention and flattering participation than a natural German, and their quick power of concentration, their penetrating intellect, their peculiar wit render them a more sensitive audience than what is regrettably to be found among the genuine and original Ger-

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mans, who are often dull and slow to comprehend.

Riemer went on to single out the women among Goethe's admirers in particular for "possess[ing] these talents at times in even more amiable form" and to name a number of cultivated Jewish matrons of the period who constituted a kind of private audience for the poet's work. Goethe, he wrote, could "always be assured of a certain response" from these women. A name Riemer does not mention but whom we know to have been one of the first and foremost promoters of the Goethe cult in Germany was the writer and feminist Rahel Varnhagen, who was probably more passionate and sophisticated in her response than most of her contemporaries.

It should be borne in mind that the group described by Riemer belonged to the upper layer of German Jewry, and that the women in this group, who comprised the first post-ghetto generation, formed a kind of leisure class. Social life in these circles was concentrated in salons and entailed primarily the cultivation of spiritual values via conversation, among other things about literary subjects. It would be questionable, of course, to judge the reading habits of other sections of German Jewry by this leisure class. Yet there is ample evidence that even Jewish families of modest means formed the habit of reading German literature regularly, once they had been introduced to its universe of discourse through secular schooling. Autobiographies of German Jews of the 19th century bear this out abundantly. Preference was given to the German classics—Wieland, Schiller, Goethe, Heine—but there are also many references to by-now forgotten authors of historical novels and works in other literary genres.

Even more than reading, a recurrent theme in these same autobiographies is theatergoing. One German Jew, Adolf Asch, is especially vivid on this subject. Describing his life in Posen in the early 1900's, Asch tells how both Jewish bachelors and Jewish family groups had fixed days of the week for attending the theater and seldom diverged from this routine. Occupying the best seats in the house, they would use the occasion to meet with friends and relatives (thereby revealing, incidentally, that though they comprised an important sector of the audience, Jews were still a group apart). And what was true of Posen was presumably true of other cities with substantial Jewish populations. When the Ring theater of Vienna burned down in 1881, the percentage of Jewish victims was so high that the city's Jewish community was plunged into mourning. (The major Jewish newspaper, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, remarked upon the "disproportionate contingent of Jews in the theater, rather than in the pubs.")

STILL more striking than the zeal of Jewish theatergoing was the preponderance of Jews at musical events, as is shown in the paradoxical relationship that existed between Richard Wagner and the Jewish public throughout the composer's career. The Jews were among Wagner's earliest supporters. He relates in his autobiography how once—in the course of preparing to conduct a concert in Breslau in the year 1863—he looked around the concert hall and suddenly noticed that all the seats in the front part of the house were occupied by Jews. At a luncheon in his honor the following day, Wagner tells us, the same thing happened: the company consisted once again entirely of Jews.

At the time of these incidents, of course, Wagner's anti-Semitic pamphlet, *Das Judentum in der Musik* ("Jewry in Music"), was not yet known to the general public, having been published anonymously in an obscure periodical in 1850. When Wagner saw fit to republish it nineteen years later under his own name, the Jews were quick to respond. One of the first reactions was an anonymous letter from Breslau "written on behalf of 7,000 Jews" from that city, and containing "abuses and threats," as the composer's wife Cosima Wagner noted in her diary. It is not hard to guess what these "threats" consisted of—a Jewish boycott of the works of the composer who had shown himself to be a reviler of the Jewish mentality and character.

What is most interesting about the "threats" is the fact that the composer and his entourage took them so seriously, fearing that the Jews, at least in places where they were numerically strong, might have the power—simply by staying away—to prevent the success of a given Wagnerian production. These fears extended even to Paris, where an imminent production of the opera *Rienzi* was thought to be in jeopardy because of Jewish anger over the pamphlet. Most of all, the Wagnerians were apprehensive about what might happen in Berlin, where, after a long struggle, *Lohengrin* was about to be staged, and a Jewish boycott would be disastrous. In the event, these fears proved groundless. On the morning after the premiere, Wagner received a telegram from his fellow musician Karl Tausig (a Jew himself but also a devoted Wagnerian), which read: "*Lohengrin* tremendous success—all Jews reconciled." Obviously, Jewish coldness toward Wagner and his music was not of very long duration. Though one performance of *Lohengrin* (in Breslau) was actually postponed because of fear of possible Jewish protests, the uproar soon subsided and relations between the composer and his audience went back to normal.

If the turmoil subsided as quickly as it did, this was in part because the end of the 1860's in Germany, when the Wagnerian scandal erupted, was a very hopeful period for German Jewry. The same year Wagner's pamphlet was reissued—1869—also marked the completion of the formal emancipation of the Jews in Germany's northern states, led by Prussia. So out of tune was Wagner's pamphlet with the prevailing trend that the Jews could afford—or so they thought—to overlook the ill-timed nastiness of an artist whose work was only

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then beginning to win general recognition. In any case, the pamphlet episode reveals dramatically the extent of Jewish participation in the musical life of Germany at that time.

This participation continued unhampered for some time to come, despite the change in Jewish fortunes which took place a decade later with the emergence of political anti-Semitism. It is significant that when leaders of the new movement requested his signature on a petition to have Jewish emancipation rescinded, Wagner was careful to turn them down. True to form, the composer found some complicated ideological justification for his refusal, but there is no reason to doubt the judgment of his associate and fellow musician Hans von Bülow (the first husband of Cosima Wagner), who accused Wagner of compromising his principles so as not to antagonize his Jewish audience. Von Bülow himself did sign the petition, though with full awareness of its possible consequences once his action became publicly known: "I shall have to face a certain proscription by the press as well as a reduction in my income," he wrote, "at least 50 percent of it. It is a fact confirmed in all my journeys that Shem and Hebron yield the most understanding and generous audience for concerts; more than that: that the participation of the non-Semites is dependent on them."

WHETHER Jews participated to the same degree in other cultural pursuits as they did in music (and to a lesser extent the theater) is a question worth asking. It is possible that attendance at concerts and plays held certain special attractions. Jews who wished to be accepted socially, for instance, but who felt inhibited about entering the circle of Gentile society, might have found sitting in a mixed audience in the theater or concert hall a convenient way of demonstrating their membership in the larger society. On the other hand, the impulse to identify with the larger society would not necessarily have required this kind of public demonstration for its fulfillment. A sense of belonging to the world outside could also be nurtured by becoming conversant with German literature, and thereby being initiated into the nation's spiritual life. As we have seen, the groundwork for this had already been laid as far back as the first decades of the 19th century, when attendance at German (or at least German-language) schools was made obligatory for Jews.

Indeed, the decisive turning point in the cultural makeup of Germany's Jewish community can be traced back specifically to the moment when traditional Jewish educational institutions—the *heder* and the *yeshiva*—were replaced by secularly oriented modern schools. Once that revolutionary step had been taken—and it met with surprisingly little resistance—Jewish parents were not content with mere elementary-school education, but made every effort to send their children to secondary schools and later even to the university as well. By 1890, the percentage of Jewish children attending secondary schools in the larger cities was three times as high as that of other religious denominations (and in some places even four). In the decades that followed, these comparative percentages continued to shift in favor of the Jews. Since more advanced schooling must have resulted in a greater receptivity to German cultural values, and a greater capacity to absorb them, we are justified in assuming a corresponding increase in the relative percentages of Jews in the reading public as well.

The historical and sociological reasons for Jewish preeminence in matters of culture need not concern us here. Certainly the traditional Jewish aptitude for study—transferred now from the religious to the secular realm—may have played a role, though this factor, obvious as it seems, cannot have been the decisive one. While it might explain the peculiar Jewish addiction to intellectual pursuits, it would have no bearing on music, for instance, for which there was no precedent in the life of traditional Jewish society. Similarly, the urge to identify with the larger German environment can be only a partial explanation. It may serve to elucidate the peculiar Jewish gift for passive absorption of cultural values, but it does not tell us why Jews also excelled as active producers of culture, revealing creative skills far disproportionate to their numerical strength in fields like science, painting, and sculpture—for which they had had no prior training in ghetto times. To explain this phenomenon, we can only assume the existence among the Jews of some sort of generalized endowment for cultural creativity which they must have carried with them when they left the ghetto and which then found both a stimulus and an outlet in the larger society.

FROM the moment the Jews of Germany made their transition from mere passive appreciators to active creators in their own right, the issue of the Jewish contribution to German culture became a subject of passionate controversy. The controversy concerned both the extent and the quality of this contribution, though it was obviously easier to count the number of cultural producers than to assess the relative merits of what they had produced.

In fact, an attempt at just this kind of count was once undertaken. In 1933 a group of leading figures within German Jewry conceived the idea of publishing a collection of essays summarizing the achievements of German Jews in every area of German artistic life. As the editor, Siegmund Katznelson, explained in his preface, the work was intended as a piece of scholarship. Its purpose was to state the bare facts of the matter in order to counter "exaggerated notions in either direction" that had gained currency on this subject. To this end, both "overestimations and underestimations" of the Jewish share in the various fields under scrutiny were to be avoided. As it happens, the contributors did a good job of obeying these guidelines, and the volume—entitled *Juden im*

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deutschen Kulturbereich ("Jews within German Culture")—remains a useful source to this day.

Scholarship aside, however, the book was obviously also a response to the political circumstances surrounding its publication in 1933. As Robert Weltsch pointed out in his introduction to the second edition (published in 1959), it was meant as a weapon to defend Jewish honor against the relentless slander and discrimination that had by now become official Nazi policy. This intention was not lost on the authorities. They confiscated the volume and forbade its distribution on the grounds, first, that it conveyed the impression that "all of German culture until the National Socialist revolution had been sustained by the Jews alone"; and, second, that it gave an entirely false picture of "the actual destructive activity of the Jews within German culture."

The reasons given by the Nazis for banning the book are of some interest here, for they reveal the utter discrepancy between the tendency of Jews to justify their presence in Germany by citing their cultural contributions and the Nazis' loathing for those very contributions (the term "destructive"—in German *zersetzend*—was a central epithet of anti-Semitic propaganda). In the clash between these opposing judgments may be seen the culmination of a long-standing conflict whose catastrophic potential was now on the point of being revealed. Intimations of this clash—and hence also the seeds of the catastrophe—can be traced historically to an earlier phase, prior to the outbreak of political anti-Semitism in the late 1870's when integration seemed to be progressing steadily.

Once the new generation of Jews had been initiated into the reigning culture, it was to be expected that the gifted among them would go beyond mere passive absorption to become original creators in their own right. Jewish cultural activity could now proceed along two or three different courses. It could use the newly won cultural elements to reshape the *Jewish* cultural tradition, adding a new layer made up of some sort of synthesis of Jewish content and German methods of expression. This was the path taken by those who dedicated themselves to the development of Jewish lore in the broader sense of the term, including not just the scholarly *Wissenschaft des Judentums* group but also those engaged in the reinterpretation of the various branches of Jewish tradition, whether in the Orthodox or the Reform camp.

But this type of undertaking, though qualitatively and quantitatively no mean achievement, remained an internal Jewish affair of which German society scarcely took notice. At the other extreme was the possibility of entering wholeheartedly into the German cultural tradition and ignoring the question of Jewish background altogether. This was the path taken by all those so-called "Germans-of-Jewish origin," whether novelists, poets, or composers, some of whom were baptized, and others not. Perceiving themselves as fully integrated into the German cultural tradition, they wished their Jewish background to be treated as a more or less regrettable accident.

There was theoretically a third avenue—although, at least in the first generation of integration, it was almost entirely avoided. Jewish novelists could have depicted contemporary Jewish society as they saw it, or perhaps the Jewish past as they had learned about it through the study of history. Jewish composers could have taken the melodies of the synagogue or the Jewish home and made them the nucleus of their compositions. Jewish poets could have derived their inspiration from the long Jewish poetic tradition, giving it a new lease on life via a new linguistic garb.

Why was this potentiality not realized, or realized only in the most rudimentary form, as for instance in Heine's *Rabbi of Bacharach*? The answer is that such an endeavor ran counter to the very idea of integration, at least as that idea was understood by its early proponents. To anything Jewish, indeed to the very word "Jew" itself, there clung a taint of deprecation, fed by the continuing spectacle of Jewish social inferiority. The prerequisite for integration into German society was therefore the more or less explicit condition that Jews shed their typical characteristics, both internal and external.

As we learn from the history of literature, drama, and the other arts, not all classes in society have always been regarded as equally suitable for artistic portrayal. There was a time when both literature and the stage were the exclusive domain of the aristocracy, and the other social classes, though politically enfranchised, had still to be granted what might be called their artistic citizenship. Jews, though they shared the political rights of the middle class in Germany, never achieved this. Jewish spokesmen in 19th-century Germany used to complain that though the German Jews had been emancipated, Judaism had not been, meaning that the Jewish religion was never really placed on an equal footing with the various Christian denominations. We in turn may modify this complaint to say that the Jews of Germany may have been emancipated, but Jewishness itself had not been. Jewish characters, for example, were not deemed fit to appear on the stage except as objects of ridicule.

For this reason, writers who wished to deal with Jewish themes in a sympathetic way would often disguise what they were doing in some other, more neutral garb. When Michael Beer, the gifted brother of the composer Giacomo Meyerbeer, wrote an interesting play about the suffering of a figure he called the Pariah, the critics correctly understood that he was depicting the lot of the despised and rejected Jew. Why then did Beer resort to subterfuge? The novelist and biographer Berthold Auerbach had the answer: the appearance of a Jew on stage would have undermined the tragic atmosphere necessary for the drama's effectiveness. When Auerbach himself wished to write a novel about

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his transformation from a devoted *yeshiva* pupil into a free-thinking university student, he projected the religious crisis onto the life of a Catholic seminarian. A forthright *yeshiva* setting, with all the attendant Jewish paraphernalia, would have alienated the reading public.

This strategy of mimicry worked very well at times. It is not true, as is often maintained, that Jewish writers like Heinrich Heine or Ludwig Börne were rejected by the Germans because of their Jewish origins. On the contrary, both these writers had a large and admiring public and appreciative critics for most of their active years. So did Auerbach himself, for that matter—the public esteemed him almost as a national hero for his portrayals of the lives of German peasants. The composers Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, too, not to mention many other now forgotten lesser musicians "of Jewish origin," were fully accepted and occasionally even admired as practitioners of their trade. To be sure, whenever one of these Jewish writers or artists took an unpopular position, his opponents were quick to resort to anti-Jewish innuendos, and to attribute his shortcomings to the fact of his origins. The reason a man like Auerbach was almost never attacked as a Jew was that he was temperamentally easygoing, and—though a lifelong democrat—rather lenient when it came to criticizing political or social inequities.

Because he antagonized no one, Auerbach's Jewishness, though he willingly acknowledged it, was not turned against him. Börne and Heine, on the other hand, possessing strong convictions on social, political, and cultural issues, and even stronger language for expressing them, were repeatedly made objects of resentment and public condemnation. On such occasions, though they had both been baptized, their Jewishness was always remembered. If they deserve to be called "Germany's stepchildren"—in the words of Solomon Liptzin—it is because they were never allowed to misbehave, as one's own children are once in a while.

It was on occasions of Jewish "misbehavior," or what onlookers construed as such, that the imperfect nature of Jewish integration in Germany became apparent. Sometimes, it is true, no particular occasion was required for the Jews to be called to account—their critics simply responded to inner promptings rather than to any stimulus from the Jews themselves. One such instance was the aforementioned pamphlet by Richard Wagner, possibly the most elaborate assault ever made on the Jewish contribution to culture, and the one most fraught with consequences.

Wagner wrote *Jewry in Music* in 1850, following his escape from Dresden, where he had taken part in the ill-fated revolution of 1848-49. He was living in Zurich at the time, in a kind of temporary retirement, reviewing his artistic career to that point, and looking ahead toward an altogether unknown future. He had been intimately associated in the past with the two most successful German Jewish composers, Mendelssohn, who had died three years earlier, and Meyerbeer, who was very much alive and prospering and who had been one of his principal benefactors. Now, however, Wagner found himself growing increasingly estranged from Meyerbeer's work, and even contemptuous of it, to the point where he wished to dissociate himself entirely from his former mentor. The diatribe against the Jews was the method he chose to accomplish this.

Lest his break with Meyerbeer be construed as merely personal, Wagner evolved an entire theory around the composer's work, attributing its shortcomings to something peculiarly inherent in the Jewish tradition and character. As already noted, Wagner chose to publish his diatribe first under a pseudonym. By the time he reissued it nineteen years later, he was well on his way to worldwide celebrity, though still frustrated in his insatiable ambitions. He still blamed the Jews for this, and in his second edition added some new names to the original list of those who, lacking the capacity to appreciate what Wagner had created, were conspiring to destroy it. (Those Jews who had converted to the Wagner creed, and there were not a few of them, were miraculously exempted from the pernicious effects of their cultural inheritance.)

What is significant about Wagner's attack is the fact that the arguments it contained, though expressed in his own strikingly arbitrary fashion, were by no means all of his own devising. Included in the brew were also many ingredients taken from such anti-Jewish predecessors as Karl Marx and Bruno Bauer, as well as others drawn from the stockpile of traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes of unknown origin. That these were available to be drawn upon is incontestable evidence that the components of anti-Semitism, both the old-fashioned and modern variety, were still present in Germany during the liberal era, though perhaps in dormant form. Both in its earlier and later versions, Wagner's attack on the Jews was not taken all that seriously by the general public. Yet the fact that it was mounted at all shows that the license which had been granted to the Jews to participate in German cultural life was still not final, and could be revoked at any time.

To say this is not necessarily to understand why it should have been so. Given the persistence of stereotypes in general, and of anti-Semitic ones in particular, we could attribute the deprecation of Jewish artistic performance to this one factor alone. Yet historical objectivity compels us to ask whether there was anything in the artistic work produced by Jews which did actually conform to the charges repeatedly made against it.

Some of these charges, of course, could be dismissed out of hand, as when one of Wagner's disciples, echoing his master's argument, maintained that one could discern the Jewish ingredient in the work of Meyerbeer and other Jewish musicians "with frightening clarity," in the same way one could taste the spices used in Jewish cooking.

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Statements like these are so obviously stereotypical that they cannot be taken seriously. But can we also dismiss so easily the observations of a man like Emil Devrient, one of the great actors of the period, and the historian of the German theater, when he said there really was a difference between Jewish and other styles of acting? Devrient, speaking about five of his Jewish colleagues in the theater, pointed out that all five were so alike in their tone of voice and mannerisms that they could have been taken for brothers, and then went on to ask why it was that Jews, otherwise known for their tenderness and sensitivity, did not use the stage as a vehicle for expressing true emotion, but always undercut their emotion through irony.

Devrient was not prejudiced against Jews, and must have been basing his judgment on something tangible when he made these comments. After all, Heine too was a specialist in the use of irony for purposes of undercutting sentiment, and this very quality in his work has often been cited as one evidence of his special Jewish genius. And indeed it is obvious that there *are* certain qualities which may be called characteristically Jewish, and which would crop up in the work of Jewish artists even after they had assimilated into a non-Jewish culture. To say otherwise, simply because anti-Semites have also remarked upon this fact for their own purposes, would be preposterous.

WHAT was pernicious about the anti-Semites—in Germany as elsewhere—was not so much their factual observations, which may or may not have been accurate, but the judgment they made of what they had observed, pronouncing any quality or characteristic that was of Jewish origin to be bad, or at least strange and foreign—in any case not worthy of being tolerated in a work that aspired to represent the German cultural heritage. The truth is that all during the liberal era in Germany this particular evaluation of Judaism did not just represent the view of a relatively small number of vociferous critics like Wagner; it was also shared by active supporters of the cause of Jewish integration like the writer Gustav Freytag, and—it is safe to say—by the general public as well. Moreover, the German Jews themselves, though struggling against the inclination to do so, often adopted the same deadly judgment of their own tradition and mentality.

This state of affairs is best demonstrated by the tremendous importance attached during this period to the issue of Jewish accents and intonations in speech and music. Wagner made this issue one of the main motifs of his attack, going so far as to assert that no Jew would ever be capable of speaking German, or for that matter any other European language, without betraying his foreign origins. Exaggerated though this assertion was, it had some basis in reality. Given the special linguistic circumstances of their past, the Jews might very well have retained certain residual expressions, usages, and intonations, just like any other group possessing a background of a distinctive dialect. But while other groups could express themselves somewhat oddly and elicit no more than amused toleration, the Jewish way of speaking was condemned and ridiculed, to the point where a special verb came into being in German slang—*mauscheln* (from the Jewish name, Moshe)—to describe how Jews talked. The term, needless to say, was not merely descriptive but conveyed ridicule and contempt at the same time. That the Jews themselves succumbed to this evaluation is evident in the tremendous effort they made both individually and institutionally (in the field of education, for instance) to eradicate all traces of foreign dialect from their speech.

The verb *mauscheln* (or, in its noun form, *Gemauschel*) soon took on broader connotations, becoming a kind of shorthand method for discrediting the artistic creation or performance of any Jew one happened to dislike. Jews themselves used it to dissociate themselves from other Jews, thus providing the anti-Semites with a kind of alibi for their activities. Wagner, for instance, always a master at twisting arguments, contended in the epilogue to his pamphlet that his Jewish friends were among the first to be repelled by examples of *Gemauschel* in the work of their co-religionists. Hans von Bülow resorted to this tactic even more explicitly, continually seeking corroboration for his negative feelings about Jews from other Jews. Thus, von Bülow pointed out that even the great Ferdinand Lasalle, the German Socialist leader, was repelled by instances of *Gemauschel* in Jewish speech patterns, and the Jewish musicians Karl Tausig and Hermann Levi were similarly repelled when this lethal entity made its appearance in the context of music.

Indeed, so far did Levi's revulsion against the tastelessness of certain Jewish composers go, according to von Bülow, that he was heard to say on one occasion that if he had to conduct a certain *Mauschel*-opera one more time, he would join the German league of anti-Semites. Given what we know of Hermann Levi and his involvement with the Wagner circle, the story is all too believable, and simply one more piece of evidence that the Jewish contribution to German culture was acceptable during the liberal era so long as it did not consist of anything Jewish. In the course of time, the ironies implicit in this state of affairs would become open sores, signaling the precarious situation of German Jewry long before explicit attacks on them by the Nazis became the official policy of the state.

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Is Peronism Finished?

Mark Falcoff

On December 10, 1983, Raúl Alfonsín of the Radical Civic Union (UCR) began a six-year term as President of the Argentine Republic. His accession consummates one of the most dramatic political reversals of the 20th century, for it represents the first time since 1946 when Argentines—freely permitted to express their preferences—have turned their backs on Peronism. Alfonsín's victory seems more impressive still when one considers its sheer dimensions (52 percent in the elections held on October 30), and the broad distribution of his mandate. It is notable as well for the fact that he clearly identifies himself as a "Left-of-Center Social Democrat" in a country which over the years has given ample proofs of a political culture decidedly to the Right of Center.

The sudden turn of Argentines away from authoritarian solutions after nearly two generations of a messianic leader-cult and seven years of military rule, combined with their apparent ideological *aggiornamento*, has provoked acute interest and sympathy throughout Latin America, Western Europe, and the United States. It has encouraged optimists and well-wishers to conclude that this magnificent country, so rich in promise (and in frustration), has finally turned the corner in its perennially troubled political life.

All this is especially remarkable in the light of Argentina's former image as the last redoubt of European fascism—whether under military juntas or populist dictatorships. This view, one feels obligated to recall, was the current wisdom in the chanceries and the world press not quite eighteen months ago. To be sure, conditions have changed since then, but what of the Argentine character? The victory of Alfonsín raises all sorts of questions no one would have thought of asking before October 30. Since Peronism has been the most persistent feature on the political landscape for nearly four decades, how could this—its first electoral defeat—have happened? Is this the end of Peronism? If so, what will replace it? If not, what form will it assume in Argentina's newly-pluralized political system? Have the Argentines—in their rapid and rather precipitous lurch toward democracy—finally found a way out?

The answer to those questions might well begin with a brief excursion into political history. Alfonsín's party, the Radical Civic Union, is the oldest political movement in Argentina and one of the most venerable democratic forces in Latin America. Founded in the 1890's, it long articulated the hopes and aspirations of Argentina's large, immigrant-descended middle class, and between the two world wars it was the country's undisputed majority party. Since then, however, it has represented a diminishing political force; today, for example, no more than one out of every four Argentine voters considers himself a Radical.

During their years of plenty the Radicals had no serious political or economic program—other than to win elections and distribute patronage to their followers. But there was really no need for them to represent much else. The country then enjoyed an advantage in the world economy as an exporter of foodstuffs which it has since lost, and, in any event, there was no other force which could rival the party's appeal. All of that changed rather abruptly in 1946, when an unknown army officer, Colonel Juan Perón, took advantage of his position within the ruling military junta to introduce three new elements into Argentine politics. One was a large, well-organized militant trade-union movement loyal to him and him alone. Another was an expansionist economic policy, which provided thousands of new opportunities for industrialists and middle-level managers in both public and private sectors. And the third was a virulent "anti-imperialism" (directed largely, though not exclusively, against the United States), which provided the ideological glue to hold together an extremely broad coalition. With these elements, Perón could quicken the hopes and—for long periods of time, at any rate—hold the support of labor leaders, military officers, entrepreneurs, small businessmen, professionals, and the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

In the years that followed Perón's first election in 1946, the Radicals attempted to meet his chal-

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lenge by upholding democratic values and sturdily opposing the intermittently authoritarian features of his regime. But after Perón's overthrow in 1955 and the proscription of his movement by the military, they shifted to a policy of attempting to coopt his disenfranchised followers. By the late 1950's, the Radical program—and even, to some degree, its rhetoric—had become indistinguishable from that of its erstwhile rival, with the additional advantage that as a truly democratic party it could offer assurances to voters whom this new posture might normally have scared away. It was a brilliant ploy, and it might have worked—if Perón had died in 1955 instead of departing to a secure European exile. But as long as he lived, the Radicals had no hope of defeating his movement in an open contest—and in fact they never did.*

IF THE person of the exiled dictator constituted an impassable barrier for the Radicals, for the Peronist party it remained its one matchless asset. Its full value was demonstrated repeatedly over the long years of proscription by the fact that against the will of this one man, even while living on another continent, Argentina was quite simply ungovernable—by civilian politicians and military juntas alike.

This capacity to shape and determine Argentine events characterized Perón even to the last moments of his life. For example, in 1973, as the result of exhaustive negotiations with the military, the ban on his party was lifted, so that it could participate in new elections. However, the generals managed to devise a legal technicality which prevented Perón from becoming a candidate himself. Undaunted, he simply designated a surrogate with no following of his own, and that is how Héctor Cámpora, a dentist and small-time politician of whom many Argentines had never heard, came to be President of the Republic. Then, three months later, when Perón decided that the new government was falling into the hands of undesirable elements on the Left, he simply ordered Cámpora and his Vice President to resign. This cleared the way for Perón's own return and subsequent reelection a few weeks later.

The most remarkable demonstration of all came in the critical weeks between Cámpora's resignation and Perón's reelection. Since the great man was already in his late seventies and evidently in failing health, the choice of a Vice President was of considerable moment, particularly because at the time Peronism was sharply divided into left and right wings, and it was expected that the tendency embodied in the vice-presidential choice would basically define once and for all the nature of the movement and therefore its future direction.

There were no obvious candidates for this honor, since over the years Perón had taken care never to groom any potential successor, and in fact had consistently purged his movement of anyone who showed promise of genuine leadership. Thus the field of speculation was extremely wide; it included military officers, labor leaders—even Ricardo Balbín, the equally venerable leader of the Radical party. In the end Perón simply sidestepped the question altogether: he imposed his third wife, María Estela ("Isabelita") Martínez de Perón,† upon the stunned convention delegates. Since she lacked political experience of any kind—her two previous occupations were nightclub dancer and housewife, respectively—skeptics were left to wonder whether Perón simply did not care what happened to his country after he was gone, or believed himself to be immortal. The Argentine electorate seemed not to care, for it gave the couple a thumping 60 percent of the vote.

Perón died in office in early July 1974, and his widow promptly became the first woman chief of state in Latin American history. By the time her term was truncated by a military coup in 1976, it was widely regarded as the most catastrophic in Argentine history. It might have proven the final discrediting of Peronism if not for the events that followed. These had the effect—miraculous to imagine, but impossible to deny—of casting her administration, with all its violence, corruption, and sheer incompetence, into a golden retrospective light.

The military government which took over in 1976 did resolve the most outstanding problem of the day—the restoration of civil peace, sundered by a host of competing urban guerrilla movements. The cost was very high, including the kidnapping and presumed execution of many innocent people still unaccounted for. But to a degree difficult to understand for those who did not experience the period first hand, this was accomplished with tacit public approval, at least at the time. In all other areas—economic development, welfare, education, civil liberties—the military's performance was actually inferior to that of its predecessor. To which one must add the unsuccessful attempt to recover an archipelago of islands in the South Atlantic (known variously as the Malvinas and the Falklands) which were wrested from the Argentines by the British more than a century ago. For the failure of that expedition raised the humiliating question of whether the Argentine armed forces were even capable of fulfilling their professional mission.

THUS, when a timetable was established for elections last year, it was not unreasonable to assume that Peronism would return

* In 1958 Arturo Frondizi was elected to the Presidency by a substantial majority, but this was only after he had struck a deal with Perón (then living in Spain) to relegalize Perón's party (after the election); Perón then instructed his followers to vote for Frondizi. When Frondizi kept his word, he was promptly removed from office by the military. In 1963 Arturo Illia, also a Radical but from a different branch of the party from Frondizi, was elected President, but the Peronists abstained from the contest and Illia limped into the Presidency with a "mandate" from 23 percent of the electorate.

† Not to be confused with Eva Duarte de Perón, the general's second wife, who was frustrated in her attempt to be his running mate in 1951.

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for a third period of power. The single stumbling block which remained, however, was utterly crucial—the need for a new leader. In any personalistic movement the problem of political succession is always a rather delicate affair, but especially so in this case, since Peronism—unlike Radicalism—possesses no internal tradition of democratic decision-making. In Perón's absence, his heirs were frankly unsure of how to proceed.

From the beginning it was clear that Señora Perón, in her Spanish exile, expected to be offered the presidential nomination, although she left open the question of whether she would actually accept it. This was one risk the party leadership had no intention of running, and it took fullest advantage of her physical absence to eliminate her from effective participation in the proceedings. After months of deliberation—and by methods still unclear to outsiders—the party chiefs passed over several more obvious choices to designate Italo A. Luder, former President of the Argentine Senate, known more recently as Señora Perón's defense attorney in the military courts which had been convened to investigate her stewardship.

For Peronism, Luder was a curious choice. A lawyer and academic, he had a prim, measured style totally at variance with the raucous, macho-populist flavor of the movement. Although late in the campaign his platform presence became a bit more electric—and his speeches harder-hitting—he never looked particularly comfortable when (following obligatory Peronist protocol) he removed his tie and jacket. Nor did he ever appear to be the effective leader of his party. At the final rally of the campaign, held in a great open square in downtown Buenos Aires, the television cameras vastly magnified the spectacle of a tiny, middle-aged professor rather incongruously folded into a phalanx of labor bosses and assorted mobsters. Their sinister aspect—dark glasses and all—was a sight few voters could have forgotten, as was the opening ritual of the ceremony itself—the burning of a coffin representing Alfonsín and the Radical party.

Far more evocative of historic Peronism was the party's choice for governor of the province of Buenos Aires, a position in Argentina almost as important as the Vice Presidency. Although originally promised to former Economy Minister Antonio Cafiero, by means of strong-arm tactics on the convention floor, it was seized by Herminio Iglesias, a thirty-five-year-old trade-union leader. Iglesias is a genuine Argentine original: in addition to his primary profession, he has dabbled in prostitution and gambling, while nonetheless enjoying curiously close relations with both the provincial police and the local Roman Catholic curia. Far from being embarrassed by such associations, Iglesias repeatedly made light of them, as well as of his own police record. His unselfconscious proletarian style, his evident contempt for civilized conduct, and his slogan, "Herminio is the people," chased away the middle-class votes that the respectable Luder was supposed to attract—and in droves.*

The Peronist campaign itself was remarkable largely for its lack of originality and inspiration. In contrast to previous contests, few promises were made. Instead, Argentine voters were invited to vote for Peronism because it represented the happier days gone by. This approach was the point of departure for an unprecedented exercise in political necrophilia. Campaign rallies began with recordings of speeches by Perón and Eva Perón; posters often featured their names and photographs more prominently than those of the actual candidates. Typical slogans included "PERÓN ALWAYS RETURNS," "EVEN IN HEAVEN PERÓN WINS," and under a huge poster of Herminio Iglesias, the banner "THE TRIUMPH OF PERÓN." All of this led Alfonsín to inquire dryly, "If they win, who is it precisely that will govern?"

The other Peronist ploy was to depict Alfonsín as the candidate of the State Department, the U. S. embassy, and the multinational corporations, making the most of the fact that he was at one time lawyer for the Argentine division of Coca-Cola. Here again, the Peronists were dwelling upon past triumphs, since their first electoral victory in 1946 was achieved partly by emphasizing the evident preference of U.S. Ambassador Spruille Braden for the Radical candidate of the day. Instead of "BRADEN OR PERÓN," this time it was "LUDER OR COCA-COLA," "ANOTHER PRODUCT OF COCA-COLA—ALFONSÍN," or "WHO ARE THE RADICALS REALLY VOTING FOR?," accompanied by a clever cartoon depicting President Reagan as Uncle Sam, holding in his palm an identically attired miniature of Alfonsín. Given the Radical candidate's unquestionable personal integrity, combined with his rather well-known opinion of the Reagan administration, the accusation seemed hardly credible; in any event, foreign affairs was by no means the most important issue in the campaign.

IF THE Peronists hoped to draw upon the accumulated capital of past electoral victories, Alfonsín ran as if his life depended upon it. During the bleak years when all overt political activity was forbidden, he crisscrossed the country dozens of times, meeting privately with party leaders and potential supporters. Once the ban was lifted, he quickly established himself as a spellbinding platform orator. By a combination of patient work in committees and an endless string of public appearances, he soon became the most visible and attractive Radical candidate, and his convention victory in June came as no surprise.

In the midst of the campaign for the Radical

* On election eve, when Alfonsín appeared on the balcony of Radical party headquarters to make his victory speech, he was accompanied by Oscar Armendériz, who had successfully run against Iglesias. When Alfonsín finished his own speech, he introduced Armendériz as "Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires," and the cheers, if anything, exceeded those given the victorious presidential candidate.

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nomination, Alfonsín disappeared for several weeks in Western Europe. There he met with the leaders of the Socialist parties of France, Spain, and Italy, where—it is generally believed—he received significant campaign contributions. (The Swedish Social Democrats are also thought to have contributed.) Since the Radical party has never been an affiliate of the Socialist International—indeed, has always taken a particular pride in its uniquely Argentine identity—this was a new departure. It was reflected in the sudden professionalism of the Radical campaign, which was able to utilize the services of the best advertising agency in the country, and in a strong emphasis on social justice and a radical redistribution of resources, themes which have not figured prominently in past Radical programs.

In his discussion of international issues, Alfonsín often seemed to be echoing the chants of Euroneutralism, although these blended easily into Argentine and Latin American notions of nonalignment and "anti-imperialism." Thus on one occasion he accused the Pentagon of "exporting McCarthyism" through the training of Argentine military officers; on another, he held both Soviet and U.S. military expenditures to be completely unnecessary. ("What they both should do is to give the money to us [the Third World] for development.") As if to respond to his Peronist critics in spades, Alfonsín established a galactic distance between himself and President Reagan. "Instead of calling us to defend democracy," he told a correspondent of the New York *Times*, "the United States today is calling us to defend a capitalism that has been evil to our country." On repeated occasions he attacked the United States for its "gunboat diplomacy" in Central America, and in his final campaign speech he included a gratuitous blast at Washington for the invasion of Grenada.

However, the single most distinguishing feature of Alfonsín's campaign was the fashion in which he courageously and squarely took on the three powerhouses of Argentine politics—the military, the trade-union movement, and the Roman Catholic church. He called for the drastic reorganization of the armed services, elimination of conscription, and reduction of the military budget to 2 percent of gross national product. He also heatedly denounced an alleged "pact" between the military and the Peronist labor movment, whose purpose, he claimed, was to forestall inquiry into any corruption or wrongdoing which might have occurred over the past ten years. While no one could prove that such an agreement existed, the accusation was plausible enough; both parties had a vested interest in covering for each other, since some of the untoward events of the period overlapped administrations. Alfonsín also called for a reorganization of the labor movement along "genuinely democratic principles," which, if accomplished, threatened to deprive the Peronists of their most powerful political arm.

As if this were not enough, Alfonsín offended the clergy with his views on education ("obligatory, secular, with the right of the state to supervise the content of private instruction") and divorce ("a subject which must be studied and resolved"). This was a veiled way of signaling that not far behind would follow the lifting of film and television censorship, an end to the policing of private morals, and—if Socialist Spain was any precedent—eventually, legalized abortion.

For both Alfonsín and Luder, the campaign was a gamble based on their particular reading of the Argentine electorate. Although in retrospect it is possible to see how and why the Radicals were right and the Peronists wrong, at the time neither party was certain its strategy would work. In this the polls were of limited assistance, since almost to the end they showed the candidates within a percentage point or two of each other, with a large "undecided" vote which probably turned decisively toward Alfonsín in the final days. With the wisdom of hindsight, however, one can now reconstruct the elements of the Radical triumph.

First, there was a massive desertion of voters from the traditional parties of the Right to Alfonsín. In the past, this current of opinion, which fluctuates between 12 and 15 percent of the electorate, has divided among three or four small, and electorally insignificant, "conservative" parties. This time, the prospect of getting rid of the Peronists once and for all (and by indirection, to disarm the labor movement politically) was simply too strong a temptation to be resisted. Quite obviously, these people did not take Alfonsín's socialist rhetoric or proposals very seriously; to them, he was a typical centrist politician who would be brought back in line by hard economic realities within ten minutes of assuming office.

Second, there was an equally impressive defection to Alfonsín from those voters who normally support parties of the Left. The sole exception was the Argentine Communist party, which for reasons of opportunism and bad judgment (both of which it has demonstrated time and again) supported the Peronists. For the rest, the entire cultural community—artists, writers, theater and film people, teachers, journalists, as well as what amounts (in Argentina) to a veritable army of psychoanalysts—supported Alfonsín. These people, who had very largely voted for Perón in 1973, were now taking revenge upon his party for having purged them from the positions of influence they briefly held during the Cámpora administration, and for subsequently reading them out of the movement altogether. Their definitive departure closes an entire cycle of Argentine intellectual history, in which left-wing intellectuals sought to force Peronism—in spite of its evident fascistic characteristics—into their taxonomy of "national-liberation" or quasi-Marxist movements.

Third, Alfonsín carried the vast majority of five

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million new electors. This was the missing generation in Argentine politics, nonexistent during the years when Perón was forging his legend, and mere children at the time of his final election in 1973. Its first political memories, therefore, were of cancelled classes, extended curfews, and "disappearances," all of which could just as easily be associated with Peronism as with the military. Moreover, Alfonsín's relative obscurity—he was only a Congressman at the time of the 1976 coup—made him something of a Jimmy Carter, untainted by any association with past events and therefore presumably able to make his choices independently. Alfonsín also benefited from the fact that the Peronists stood in actual horror of the younger generation, and actively discouraged young people from playing a significant role in the campaign. In the early 1970's the entry of the young into politics had coincided with the infiltration into the party of Marxists and urban guerrillas, an experience its leaders were not anxious to repeat. At the Radical party, where panache and excitement have perennially been in short supply, younger voters were welcomed with open arms. Nor can one overlook the attraction of Alfonsín's liberalism in cultural and personal matters, which greatly appealed to a generation that during the last decade had been forbidden from seeing hundreds of foreign films.

Fourth, a significant minority of the Peronist voters split their ticket and cast their presidential ballot for Alfonsín. Precisely how many it is still impossible to say, but the fact remains that the Radical candidate carried many historic Peronist areas, including the solidly working-class district of Avellaneda, just across the river from the federal capital. Even in some of the so-called "poor provinces" of the North and Northwest, regions that have always been Peronist bastions, Alfonsín did extremely well—in Catamarca (50.7 percent), Salta (47.7), Chaco (49.5), and Misiones (49.3). His coattails were long enough to carry many local candidates along with him, so that for the first time since the years prior to World War II, the Radicals will control the Chamber of Deputies.*

Future historians will have to determine whether this development was due primarily to Luder's uninspired campaign, Alfonsín's uninhibited tendency to promise everything to everybody, or the definitive exhaustion of Peronism as a political and ideological force. But the loss even for a moment of the near-totality of the working class in Argentina is something which will undoubtedly preoccupy the Peronist leadership for years to come.

Finally, the election results reflect some significant changes in Argentina's electoral demography. During the campaign, the Peronists tried to discount the importance of the record crowds which Alfonsín drew everywhere he went by pointing out that they were almost exclusively composed of the "middle class." This conveniently overlooked the fact that Argentina has always had a large middle class; that the Peronists themselves have never been able to win without the support of at least part of this class; and, most importantly, that the number of authentic proletarians within the workforce has long been declining as a proportion of the whole. In Argentina, as in most industrial countries, the percentage of office workers and persons in the service trades has risen dramatically in recent years, to which one should add skilled laborers in the most modern industries, where the work environment is very different from the meatpacking houses or the metallurgical plants which were the birthplace of Peronism. While Argentina is very imperfectly industrialized, and there are many distortions which prevent it from fully replicating the social structure of Western Europe or the United States, for the limited electoral purposes of Peronism, the change was sufficient to represent a serious political problem.

All of this points to some rather pregnant conclusions. Many Argentine voters—perhaps as many as half of all those who cast their ballot for Alfonsín—did so as a way of voting *against* Peronism rather than for the Radicals. From this follows a rather uncomfortable corollary: Alfonsín's mandate, impressive as it appears on paper, derives from a constituency which is not merely complex in the extreme but downright contradictory. Before long the new President will have to make some hard decisions, which are bound to cost him the support of some of those who voted for him. As the most important opposition party, the Peronists will be excellently positioned to benefit from the disillusionment and dissatisfaction which engulf almost any government elected in difficult times.

Or will they? To an unpleasant degree, *this* is the question which must be answered to assess Alfonsín's chances of success accurately. Peronism has been momentarily defeated at the ballot box, but as a social and political phenomenon it is still a power to contend with. It continues to control the trade-union movement, attracts a residual portion of the middle class, and enjoys a large and even fanatical following among the "darker" Argentines who reside in the provinces bordering Bolivia and Paraguay, and what is of even greater moment, their cousins who have emigrated to the cities of Buenos Aires, Rosario, and Santa Fe. These people, and the cause they represent, will not simply go away. The best one can hope for is the eventual transformation of Peronism into something resembling an "ordinary" political party, capable of representing at least four out of ten Argentines in the parliament and provincial assemblies.

But this will require a serious process of self-examination, some drastic shakeups in leadership, and, even more problematical, a perceptible trans-

* I except from this analysis those periods since 1955 when Radicalism benefited electorally from the proscription of Peronist candidates or from Peronist abstention.

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formation of the political culture of the movement, which has invariably been personalist, authoritarian, and intolerant of differences with its opponents. It is frankly difficult to imagine how this transformation will take place, but if it does, the next Peronist government—elected either in 1989 or at the latest 1995—will be very different from its predecessors.

But suppose this does not happen—then what? Either Peronism will dissolve into two or three factions, no longer capable of winning national elections, but for that very reason utterly irresponsible in its public conduct. Or more somber still, having abandoned the hope of conquering power through the ballot, it will begin to explore the possibilities of joint action with the armed forces.

That, as everyone knows, has happened before. There is, of course, one final possibility: lacking a unifying personality to lead it, Peronism will simply dissolve as a political movement. But this is not a likelihood in the near term, for there are simply too many rocks upon which the ship of state can founder, and, therefore, too many opportunities for the opposition to seize—by fair means or foul.

For despite the current flush of optimism and even joy which pervades Argentine society, Alfonsín faces some rather formidable obstacles. One is a $40-billion foreign debt whose servicing in 1984—under present arrangements—would require more than 90 percent of the country's foreign-exchange earnings. Another is the need to restructure civil-military relations, and to survive in office while doing it. Yet another is to investigate past peculation and wrongdoing, with particular attention to accounting for some thousands of "disappeared." The government must meet a domestic economic crisis—hyperinflation and the collapse of purchasing power—utterly without precedent in the nation's history.

Perhaps the most serious problem of all will be to meet the political challenge raised by Peronist control of the labor movement. During the campaign it was common to hear Peronist leaders obliquely suggest that if Alfonsín somehow managed to win the election, he would be unable to govern, for without support of the unions there could be no successful incomes policy. Obviously, the new President has already thought about this, to the point of proposing a new labor code which would reorganize the entire trade-union movement. In this, the Peronists will naturally have no particular reason to help him along. A minimum of labor peace would be difficult enought to maintain under present circumstances; now, however, more than ever, authentic social demands are bound to become entangled with the struggle for political power.

SINCE at least 1955 the pattern of Argentine politics has been disarmingly simple. Because of deep social and political divisions, no civilian government could effectively rule, and therefore none finished its elected term. Each was brought to an end by a military coup, which was supported at least passively by a substantial body of civilian opinion, in some cases an identifiable majority. Yet no military government could provide for sustained economic growth, or even—with all of the resorts of authoritarian rule—for social peace. Eventually the generals would find it in their interest to retreat to the barracks and allow the civilians a turn at undermining *their* prestige. And the cycle would begin anew.

Is Argentina about to break out of that vicious circle? It all depends upon how one views what sociologists call the "civil society"—broadly speaking, the elements which make up a political community and the values it represents. Here there are several cautionary notes. Argentina has returned to democracy as the result not of a revolution but of a military defeat; however, unlike Germany or Japan, there has been no extended foreign occupation, and with it, a thorough reshaping of institutions. Rather—to put it a bit inelegantly—many of the same people who today celebrate the return to democracy yesterday were cheering General Galtieri, and the day before that, General Perón.

And yet to some degree there is a "new Argentina." It is made up first of all of the 20 to 25 percent of the electorate that has always voted Radical and whose democratic commitments have never been in doubt. To these must be added the younger voters untainted by experiences of the past, and, finally, those of their elders who have meditated upon their errors and insist that they have learned from them.

At least for a time, Argentina's two political cultures—past and present—must live together side by side, but in the end one must prevail. The happiest outcome will require skill and wisdom from the politicians, discretion from the military, restraint and good sense from the citizenry, and the willingness of all to accept something less than total victory in the struggle for scarce resources. It is a theme familiar to Western democracies, but being played out here under circumstances far more fragile and dangerous. In effect, Argentina is about to resume the path it freely abandoned in 1946. It will need—and deserves—more than an ordinary measure of luck to complete its long and chartless journey.

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The Democrats and Their Rules

Penn Kemble

THE actual selection of delegates to the Democratic party's presidential nominating convention is about to start: we are coming to the end of the beginning. Once again, the party has been ruffled by debates about the reformed delegate-selection rules launched by the McGovern commission in 1969. But one thing has changed: the liberal press has shown signs of peevishness toward what one New York *Times* op-editorialist described as "layer upon layer of rules having little to do with the original goal of a fair and open system." A Washington *Post* editorial chided the Reverend Jesse Jackson for his complaints about the rules: "His campaign might be better served if he concentrates on the substantive issues rather than on what amount to, at most, marginal complaints about the nominating process."

Respectable opinion now seems to be saying that it is time for Democrats to stop pettifogging about rules and get back to serious politics. (Perhaps this is because fashionable liberalism at this writing has a Democratic front runner whom it likes.) But the rules debate that has engrossed the Democratic party for more than a decade has involved what indeed are some very serious and substantive political issues. We are likely, before this year's campaign is over, to see further evidence of how the results of the reform era stand between the Democratic party and the ideas and constituencies the party must again embrace if it hopes to win and govern.

Those who doubt this should consider Byron E. Shafer's lumbering but ultimately devastating study of the major Democratic reform wave of 1969-72.* Shafer argues that what happened to the Democratic party in those years has had a more profound effect on the American idea of the political party than anything since the founding of our parties in the 1830's. He insists that it not only changed the form of the party, but radically transformed the leadership, the strategically dominant constituencies, and the party's ideological purpose. It was, in his summary, "a shift from a party of officeholders to independent activists and from spokesmen for a blue-collar rank-and-file to members of a white-collar electorate."

Shafer painstakingly reconstructs many of the complex ploys and maneuvers through which this change was worked. Although he keeps an appropriately academic distance, his account makes it clear that, despite their protestations about democratic participation, the reformers grasped for control of the party through some shamelessly undemocratic methods. (Says Eli Segal, counsel to the McGovern commission and an avid reformer, "We were always waiting for some people to wake up and say, 'Hey, they're stealing our party from us,' and it never happened.")

But the so-called regulars do not fare much better in this retelling of the reform saga. Although Shafer seems to harbor some nostalgia for the urban machine politicians of yesteryear, his account of their defeat will not inspire many tears. The regulars do seem to be much more decent people than their adversaries imagined (so much so that the reformers were often taken aback by the regulars' willingness to make concessions). But they were also pitifully timid, short-sighted, and incapable of grasping any principle that might have served their defense. When from time to time the AFL-CIO's Al Barkan ventured out of his supposedly neutral corner to come to their aid, the regulars promptly betrayed him. Their conduct suggests that the Democratic party was already suffering from dry rot, and that the reform movement can be blamed only for adding to the damage when it was meant to provide some badly needed repairs.

Shafer also recalls the contribution of the media to the debacle. One party regular (Vice Chairman Geri Joseph) complained that the reformers "had all the good words." The media by and large took the reformers' words at face value, treated the regulars like people under indictment, and rarely probed to see if the reformers' actions departed from their public professions. The media's generosity to reform meant that very little of the public realized just what kind of change had taken place in the Democratic party until it became directly visible during the 1972 convention. Immediately thereafter, contrary to normal experience, the Democratic candidate suffered a sudden collapse in the polls—graciously attributed by the media and McGovern alike to the revelations about his running mate's past psychological problems.

What saves the reformers from being the unmitigated villains of Shafer's story is that although they demonized their opponents, and were not above conspiratorial tactics, they were deeply confused about just how to create the kind of party they wanted. Shafer recounts how the reform leaders stumbled into the language which eventually

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* *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics*, Russell Sage Foundation/Basic Books, 618 pp., $29.95.

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required quotas for blacks, women, and youth in every convention delegation. Their more cherished goal was the creation of a strict system of proportional representation based upon candidate and philosophical preferences—not demographic characteristics. It took them some time to realize that representation by quota contradicted their other ideals about participatory politics, and was bound to interfere with any system of proportional representation based on political criteria. But by then groups of blacks and women (among them Mrs. Arvonne Fraser, wife of the reform leader Congressman Don Fraser) had locked in on the quota language, and there was no turning back.

The speed with which middle-class white women grasped the quota concept was itself a surprise. Eli Segal, the commission's counsel, once believed that the language of the guideline requiring "reasonable representation" for various groups might be interpreted to mean that the size of any minority group in a state's convention delegation might deviate by as much as 40 percent from the fraction such a group comprised of the state's population (in other words, a fairly flexible measure). Then his wife Phyllis, a legal aide to the newly-formed National Women's Political Caucus, joined the fray, and with her fellow caucus members, turned a guideline into a quota. (Blacks, Shafer argues, would probably not have needed quotas to secure broad representation under a genuinely participatory delegate-selection system.)

IT MAY seem surprising that George McGovern has given this scholarly debunking of the reform experience an effusively warm jacket blurb (". . . [T]his book will quickly be recognized as the definitive work on the fascinating but widely misunderstood reform movement that shook the Democratic party . . . ," etc.). Cynics will wonder if Senator McGovern has really read the book. But a more hopeful interpretation is that even McGovern has now grown uncomfortable with the legend which gives him the central role in promoting reforms that have had such disappointing results.

In Shafer's recounting, McGovern's role in the reform commission was something less than Machiavellian. He was frantic about upstaging a prospective rival for the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination (Iowa's Senator Harold Hughes, the commission's vice chairman, who had the loyalty of many on the staff) and confused about the meaning of many of the proposed reforms. Perhaps McGovern will even be pleased with the reflection on his role offered by commission member George J. Mitchell, now the junior Senator from Maine: "McGovern gets credit for all these rules, but the fact is that McGovern never took much part. He always had to take a leak when there was a crucial vote. *Hughes* was the outstanding guy on the commission."

If McGovern had some privately redeeming qualities, then Larry O'Brien (a Kennedyite organization politician chosen by Hubert Humphrey as a middleground Democratic National Chairman) deserves more blame for the reform results than he is usually given. The Democratic National Committee had final authority over the reform proposals, and the committee had a solid majority from the regular wing of the party. These people looked to O'Brien, their chairman, for guidance on how to respond to the so-called "flakes" on the McGovern commission. But instead of leading the regulars, O'Brien used his standing with them to help in cleverly putting across some of the most extreme of the new rules. Some of his colleagues suspect this was because he actually believed they were right, or, as one commissioner puts it, "he got religion." Others think O'Brien was "fishing for the vice-presidential nomination." But the result was that policies the reformers put forward as negotiating positions often were accepted in full by the National Committee.

As a result of the reform process, the character of the Democratic party was deeply altered. The regular party leaders who had elected O'Brien were required to yield their convention seats to others who in many cases had less claim to being representative of the voters than those whom they replaced. Shafer sums it up succinctly: "Once, the principal ex-officio delegates at national party conventions had been regular-party officials; now, the principal ex-officio delegates were to be women, youth, and racial minorities."

It did not prove to be a winning formula.

TO SEE just how impressive these Democratic defeats have been, one need only turn to Nelson W. Polsby's *Consequences of Party Reform*,* where they are forcefully detailed. Slightly more than one-half of the American voters still identify themselves as Democrats, while only about one-third consider themselves Republicans. Democrats have majorities in Congress, across the state legislatures, and in the governorships. Yet since the Left gained major influence at the 1968 convention, the Democrats have lost three out of four elections —and elected a very weak President in the fourth.

Polsby rejects the argument that Republicans won their recent presidential victories by drawing upon the growing body of independent voters. One of his well-constructed tables shows that the average defection of Democrats to the Republican candidate has grown from a 1952–68 level of 18.6 percent to a 1968–80 level of 27 percent: Republicans, in other words, have been drinking at the Democratic well. Polsby also cites the studies which demonstrate that the new Democratic rules for representing the previously underrepresented have not produced any material change in the socioeconomic status of Democratic convention delegates, but have instead produced conventions which stand discernibly to the Left of the Democratic electorate.

But when Polsby turns from description of the party's predicament to analysis and remedies, he becomes less persuasive. He does not ascribe much effect to the party's quota rules and the Left-leaning caucuses which thrive on them. He blames the problem instead on the increased use of direct primaries to

* Oxford, 267 pp. (paper), $8.95.

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select national convention delegates, who then become robots at an "automated, non-deliberative national nominating convention where state party leaders and officeholders play increasingly passive roles. . . ." In such processes, the participants are locked early on into ideological positions and candidate machines, and are tempted by the mass media to battle out their differences in extreme and polarizing ways.

It is true enough, as Polsby shows, that the percentage of convention delegates in both parties who are committed to candidates by primary elections has doubled since 1960—from about one-third to about two-thirds of the total. This no doubt has enhanced the influence of the media, the big political contributors, and the professionals who can best manipulate them.

Polsby's attitude toward primaries seems to be rooted in a long-established bias in American political science: a disdain for American populism and a high regard for British parliamentarianism. Yet the impulse toward primaries in the Democratic party during the past decade can hardly be explained as a mindless yearning by the American voters to sound their barbaric yawps over the roofs of the world. In large measure, state parties and Democratic presidential candidates were driven to primaries in order to escape a tangle of rules and procedures which put them at the mercy of activists on the party's Left.

It bears remembering that George McGovern's legions captured many delegates in unlikely places during the state caucuses and conventions of 1972 using tactics derived from the reform rules. Polsby wants to return delegate selection to the state parties, and to scrap almost *all* national rules. Presumably he believes that the state parties are composed of thoughtful, mainstream citizens who, eschewing primaries for reflective deliberation, will choose wiser candidates than those who have recently been put forward. This seems a bit naive given the extent to which state parties have now been "reformed" themselves.

The primary-election system still gives a candidate the greatest voice in choosing who will represent him at the convention and gives the voters the clearest choice over who in turn will represent them. Until some new, mainstream force arises which is capable of withstanding the assaults of the Left or other extremists in caucus meetings and conventions, the primary system still offers the best prospect for returning the Democratic party to more solid political ground.

THESE two books, some recent press commentary, and the decision of the Democratic National Committee to offer some 568 at-large convention seats to Democratic officeholders and party officials, all suggest that it may not be long before it is again possible seriously to debate the more controversial aspects of the Democratic reforms within the party itself. If such a debate recurs—not likely until after the 1984 convention—it will not pit regulars against reformers as in the past. The old-line regulars are by now pretty well gone. But there could be some useful debate about the two conflicting reform ideas that arose in the deliberations of the McGovern commission itself back in 1969: political or philosophical representativeness versus demographic representativeness.

The 1984 Democratic convention will surely be "representative" in terms of the preferred demographic groups, which now have grown to include Hispanics, Native Americans, and the puzzling category of Asian/Pacific Americans. This convention may also be reasonably representative of the presidential preferences of Democratic voters. But it is hardly likely to reflect the sentiments of the 27 percent of the Democrats (and 25 percent of the black Democrats) who describe themselves as conservatives. It is not likely to be representative of those 55 percent of the Democratic voters who say that the U.S. should take a more forceful stand toward the Soviet Union even if it increases the risk of war, or of those 88 percent of the Democrats who believe the courts are not harsh enough with criminals, or of those 79 percent who favor voluntary school prayer. Nor is it likely, despite the best efforts of the AFL-CIO, to be sufficiently representative of the economic interests of the lower-middle or working class. And for *all* these reasons, strange as it may sound to some, the Democratic party will be less effective as the party of liberalism.

In a curiously backhanded way, the conflict between political representation and demographic representation has been raised again by a candidate on the party's Left. When the Reverend Jesse Jackson declared that he means "to renegotiate the relationship between black America and the Democratic party," he was saying that while blacks selected to fill a quota may provide the appearance of black representation, they do not necessarily provide an authentic voice for the interests of the black electorate. As he recently put it, they are "people appointed from the top down, not elected from the bottom up." Jackson's intention to offer black convention representation based upon actual votes instead of "affirmative action" seems to imply that he believes blacks can and should stand on their own feet.

Some liberals may resent Jackson's disdain for their past generosity, and others may wonder if he is indeed the appropriate voice for a new black political independence. But his challenge makes an interesting point. Suppose he wins the vast majority of black primary votes. Whom then do Mondale's black delegates represent? Suppose Jackson angrily withdraws. Does this mean that blacks will not really be represented at the San Francisco convention?

SUCH confusion is but one perplexing result of the quota system. Others will likely arise. For many, the "gender gap"—the fact that Reagan appears to have more support among men than women in the polls—has become the last best hope of liberalism. But there is already a contest under way to see how the gender gap will be defined. The decision by the National Organization for Women (NOW) to endorse Walter Mondale (without even a nod either to NOW's Republican members or to black women who support Jesse Jackson) signals an intention to be in on the action at San Francisco. To NOW,

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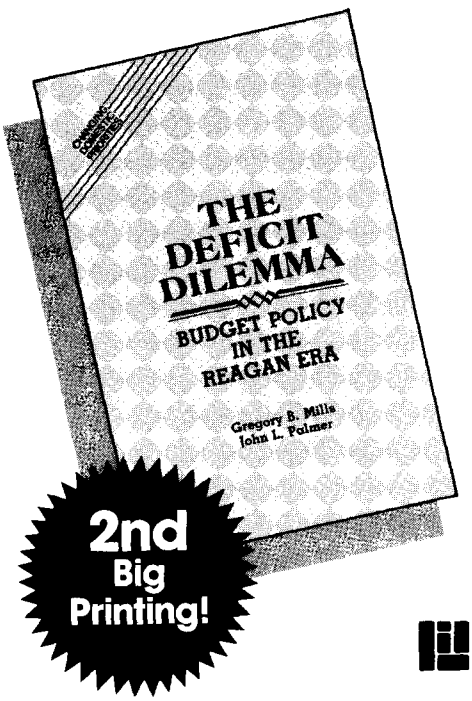
the gender gap represents further evidence of the persistence of male oppression, to be fought with the weapons of radical feminism. Other Democratic strategists—male and female—see the gender gap as another reflection of the general unhappiness of lower-income voters (often women) with the Reagan administration. In this strategic dialogue, the ideological presumption of the quota rule for women—that women will be cheated out of their fair share of convention seats by Democratic men if they are not rigorously protected—provides powerful moral sanction for the radical feminists. If they impose their definition of the gender gap, it could easily go the way of ERA and possibly even become a source of weakness rather than strength for the Democrats. Besides, a party that wants to appeal to the public's ideal of fairness is not likely to be helped if its own concept of fairness turns out to be one of imposing quotas which thoroughly disregard the attributes of individuals.

What the Democratic party badly needs is an approach that will win back working people and the many Democrats who believe America has serious responsibilities in the international defense of the democratic idea. The Democratic convention could launch such an approach by beginning to amend its rules and practices to encourage representation along philosophic rather than demographic lines. Evidence of disagreement on important matters of policy and strategy among those who are the supposed beneficiaries of the quota rules is proof—if studies such as Shafer's and Polsby's were not enough—that quotas no longer offer a sound basis for selecting convention delegates. This is undeniably a healthy development.

The Basic Primer on 1984's Top Topic



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On Capital Punishment

THE DEATH PENALTY: A DEBATE. By ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG and JOHN P. CONRAD. *Plenum Press. 305 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR.

IF we must have another book on the rights and wrongs of the death penalty, we are unlikely to get one much better than this debate between Ernest van den Haag and John P. Conrad. Van den Haag has long been one of the ablest defenders of capital punishment, and Conrad, previously unknown to me, is at least a more reasonable abolitionist than some of his fellows, such as Ramsey Clark.

It may be, however, that the debate is largely academic. Despite the opinion of a great majority of ordinary citizens and their elected representatives that capital punishment is the best cure for many murderers; despite the fact that the Supreme Court has held it constitutional for the more atrocious murders; and despite the fact that more than a thousand condemned murderers now inhabit the nation's death rows, the indefatigable and incessant litigation of abolitionist zealots has limited the number of actual executions to an average of about two a year in the twelve years since the Supreme Court held in *Furman* v. *Georgia* that the ultimate punishment of murderers is not *per se* "cruel and unusual" and thus is not in violation of the Eighth Amendment. Most of these few have been men—no women have been sentenced to death in recent years— who have decided they prefer death to long incarceration and have refused to authorize any more appeals or petitions for habeas corpus. (Even in these cases lawyers have sometimes argued that the views of their "clients" should be disregarded, since they do not know their own best interests.) Of five murderers executed in 1981, only one sought to avoid his fate.

The Supreme Court has lately attempted to limit the number of lengthy reviews of death sentences, but so far without much success. As Justice Powell wearily put it a few months ago in *Kemp* v. *Smith*:

> This is the fourth time that this capital case has required action by this Court: once on direct appeal, once on state habeas corpus, once on federal habeas corpus, and now in Smith's second federal habeas proceeding. Apart from rehearings, this case has been reviewed sixteen times by state and federal courts since Smith's conviction in 1975.

One reason for the extreme difficulty of actually executing anyone is that the rule of *res judicata*—that once a case has been finally decided, it cannot be relitigated—does not apply to petitions for habeas corpus alleging some violation of a convict's constitutional rights. He may file an infinite number of petitions alleging different violations (or, for that matter, the same ones); every petition, no matter how frivolous, will delay the execution for weeks or months, and its denial will be appealed, which takes even longer.

Another reason has to do with the complex procedures which the Supreme Court has in recent years required for consideration of aggravating and mitigating circumstances; these have so far proved surefire breeders of litigation, as has the inevitable contention that the particular convict has been more severely treated than others of equal viciousness. Another reason, according to van den Haag, is that judges, many of whom have been taught by liberal professors in college and law school, are more likely than ordinary people to be merciful to criminals.

The "liberal" attitude toward murderers is well exemplified by two famous cases, those of Warren Kimbro and Jack Henry Abbott. Kimbro, a Black Panther convicted of kidnapping, torturing, and murdering a suspected informer, was greeted as he left prison by Harvard's Graduate School of Education, which welcomed him as an M.A. candidate, despite his lack of a college degree. (The Reverend William Sloane Coffin, Jr. said Kimbro's trial was "legally right but morally wrong," presumably meaning also that the kidnapping, torture, and murder were legally wrong but morally right.) Abbott, a convict who endeared himself to Norman Mailer and other literati by writing a book denouncing the prison system and bourgeois democracy in general, was paroled and led a life of literary celebrity until he killed another man and returned to the pen. His victim would be alive today if Abbott had been hanged in the first place.

These nonstop legal proceedings have produced one of the most curious of the abolitionist arguments: death is not a practical sanction, for the inevitable litigation makes prohibitive its cost in time and money. In effect: I have poured glue in the works of your watch; it is therefore worthless, and you ought to throw it away. By the same token, the abolitionists are quite capable of arguing that, since their efforts have made executions so infrequent, they have become an "unusual," if not cruel, punishment. So long as the supply of eager lawyers holds out, then—and it shows no signs of drying up—it will remain a labor of Sisyphus to execute anyone, no matter how just and constitutional his sentence may be.

An academic debate on the subject might nonetheless be worthwhile if only to clarify the issues. Unfortunately, *The Death Penalty* presents few arguments, pro or con, which have not been heard before, and the book is thus unlikely to change anyone's views. Few members of the large majority who favor the death penalty (known to their opponents as "retentionists") will be converted by Conrad, and van den Haag's reasoning, no matter how cogent and logical, will not

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change the minds of any abolitionists, for ultimately their opposition is not based on reason or logic but on emotion and what they call morality. If the debate is addressed to anyone, it is to the small number of people who have no opinion on the subject.

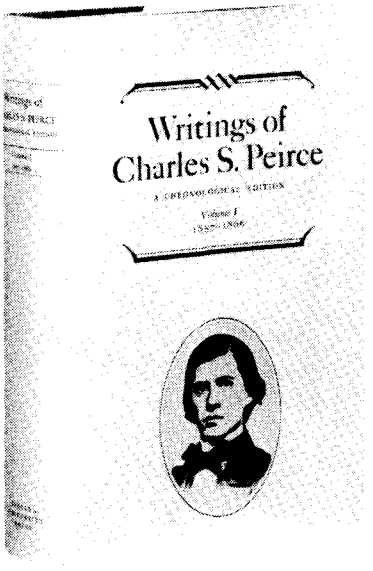
BOTH Conrad and van den Haag consider the death penalty in the light of the purposes of any type of punishment. The first is "retribution," espoused particularly by Conrad. Apparently it means that the penalty should deprive the wrongdoer of the benefit of his crime and express society's disapproval of his conduct. The death penalty accomplishes this, but so can lesser punishments. A second purpose is incapacitation. Execution achieves this goal more surely than imprisonment, for permanent incarceration exists mainly in theory, as shown by the case of Jack Abbott. Conrad, however, argues that the incapacitation of one murderer is useless, since another stands ready to take his place. (This implies that there must be a vacancy before a criminal can take up the trade of murder, although in fact it seems obvious that every execution means one fewer practicing murderer.)

A third purpose is rehabilitation. Though death does not exactly rehabilitate a killer, Conrad concedes that imprisonment rarely does either. There are murderers, such as the people who kill an unfaithful spouse or lover, who are very unlikely to do it again, but not because they have been rehabilitated. Jean Harris, who shot a lover who had grown tired of her, is an example. But people who commit *crimes passionels* have rarely been executed, even in the past, and could not today be constitutionally sentenced to death.

To these reasons for punishment one might add simple revenge, the normal human desire to see bad men get what is coming to them. But most people believe that the *principal* purpose of punishment lies elsewhere, in convincing other potential criminals that the benefits of the crime are outweighed by the risk of punishment. The two debaters in this book agree that the best way to achieve that goal is to make punishment swifter and more certain. At present the American criminal justice system is unsuccessful in both respects; most crimes go unpunished. In part the failure is a price we pay for due process of law, but much could be done to increase the likelihood of punishment without violating the Fifth Amendment. An increase in the *severity* of punishment also increases its deterrent effect: Conrad concedes that criminals fear a long prison term more than a short one.

The crucial question then becomes whether the death sentence deters murder more than the threat of twenty years or life in the penitentiary. Common sense suggests that it does, for the herculean legal efforts of almost all convicted murderers to avoid execution show that they fear it more than imprisonment. But the statistical evidence is inconclusive. Until comparatively modern times, statistics on crime practically did not exist. Abolitionists are fond of telling a venerable tale: in the 18th century, pickpockets, who if caught could be hanged, regularly worked the crowds watching public hangings. Neither van den Haag nor Conrad, however, knows the source of the story, which seems to be no more than a popular anecdote, wrongly attributed to Dr. Johnson. Even if the myth were true, it would prove nothing, for we do not know how many pickpockets there were in London in those days, or how many of them were hanged, or whether there would have been more without the hangings.

Modern statistics are better, but furnish no conclusive proof of the superior deterrent effect of the death penalty. Comparisons of the murder rates in jurisdictions which have capital punishment and in those which do not are not of much help, for there are too many other variables, such as the number of young males and the racial and socioeconomic mix in the respective populations. But Conrad is clearly wrong in maintaining that "there is not a jot of evidence" the death penalty deters murder more than incarceration. In 1973 Isaac Ehrlich applied the techniques of mathematical economics to the problem and concluded that every execution



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prevented seven or eight murders. Ever since, there has been a hot controversy between statisticians who agree with him and those who do not. So far as the argument is conducted in English rather than in mathematical formulas, Ehrlich seems to me to have somewhat the better of it. But his opponents may be right in saying that because of the complexity of the social phenomenon involved, we will never know with certainty.

Evidence of the deterrent effect of capital punishment is, of course, irrelevant to those who oppose it. Abolitionists say simply that killing people is wrong. The state should not, "in cold blood," kill the most flagitious murderer, not even, some of them say, if his execution would save not merely seven, but *500* innocent lives.

What seems to me a much stronger argument against capital punishment, however, is the chance that an innocent man will be executed. Yet that chance is very small; I know of no modern case in which there seemed to me to be any real doubt of a condemned murderer's guilt. Still, it cannot be said that such a thing is impossible. The only answer is that an unjust execution, if it should ever occur, should be treated as a variety of wrongful death, caused by the state, like being run over by a negligently driven Post Office truck, for which the victim's survivors are entitled to compensation.

There are other arguments for abolition, some of which I suspect are not taken very seriously even by abolitionists. One is that execution is distressing to those who must carry it out. As Conrad writes, "The sense that killing people is wrong will rise in the mind of a decent man, no matter what the condemned man has done to merit his execution, [although] it is always possible to find tough and callous men to do the work. It is wrong to delegate these functions to such men." But why? Sometimes toughness and callousness are necessary and desirable qualities, as with soldiers and surgeons, or, for that matter, judges. Nor are such qualities always needed. I dislike trapping mice, but I don't think I would have flinched at springing the trap on Ernst Kaltenbrunner or Adolf Eichmann. (The Nazi war criminals are not mentioned by Conrad.) Another argument: execution prevents "reconciliation between society and the offender." Baloney. Another: the criminal is deprived of his right to remorse and atonement. More baloney. Yet another: "The real agony is in the long wait for execution." The wait could and should be made much shorter.

Finally, it is also asserted that a disproportionate number of blacks are sentenced to death. Indeed, racial discrimination was among the reasons advanced by a majority of the Supreme Court for invalidating the particular death sentences involved in *Furman* v. *Georgia*. But Conrad concedes that it is not true today. Blacks are overrepresented on death row because, for a variety of reasons, they are overrepresented among murderers. Yet all of the five men executed in 1981 were white.

There is no absolute proof that capital punishment saves the lives of innocent victims of potential murderers. But there is also no conclusive evidence that it does not do what common sense suggests that it does.

Neoisolationism

THE INTEMPERATE ZONE: THE THIRD WORLD CHALLENGE TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. By RICHARD E. FEINBERG. *Norton. 257 pp. $17.50.*

Reviewed by SCOTT MCCONNELL

RICHARD FEINBERG is an economist. He is also a policy intellectual who served in a mid-level capacity on the policy-planning staff of the State Department during the Carter administration. He has been a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. And it was he who appeared on the MacNeil-Lehrer show on the evening Americans learned of the invasion of Grenada, proclaiming, in a measured tone, that we had just "snatched defeat from the jaws of victory."

The Intemperate Zone spells out the set of assumptions which underlie that extraordinary remark, and which the author describes, without excessive modesty, as "neorealism." His central premise is the primacy of economics over politics, of trade over ideologies, of credits over rhetoric. Americans, he argues, need not worry over political developments in the Third World—it is the world market of economic goods, not ideas, that ultimately counts, and in that world market American banks and multinational corporations play a powerful, beneficial, and moderating role.

Feinberg would thus have American policy seek to accommodate revolutionary regimes in the Third World. American diplomats, he believes, should follow the example of American banks and corporations, which have already found their dealings with Third World nations on the Marxist-Leninist path to be just as profitable as those with so-called moderate or pro-Western regimes. According to Feinberg, no vital American interests are affected by the domestic structure of Third World countries. In fact, our efforts to create durable alliances with friendly regimes are inherently counterproductive. By polarizing diplomatic choices, American policy has only created opportunities for the Soviet Union, whose client states would otherwise be glad to reject Soviet tutelage and drift, as ours already do, toward nonalignment.

IDEAS like Feinberg's—more properly called neoisolationist than neorealist—have been around for quite some time. Political figures as ideologically disparate as Andrew Young and Herbert Hoover have urged an American diplomacy restricted to trade and the force of our democratic example. Still, the reformulation of a neoisolationist argument by a man with recent government experience, who has no obvious ideological axe to grind, provides a useful occasion for a reexamination of what some of America's interests in the Third World really are.

The neoisolationist argument has been revived, of course, by virtue of the wildly unhappy results of recent American policies. Feinberg is

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SCOTT MCCONNELL *contributed "The 'Neutralism' of E.P. Thompson" to our April 1983 issue.*

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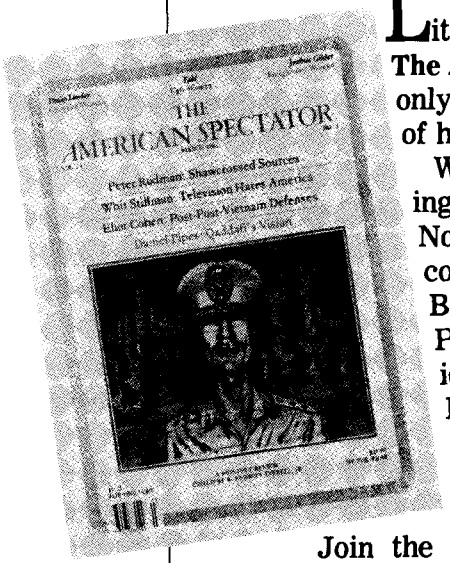

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adroit at sketching some of the policy dilemmas as they were perceived within the State Department during his tenure there. In Central America, for instance, what social forces might be counted upon to embody both economic growth and democratic values? Local business elites seemed a plausible answer to Carter administration officials. What happened in Nicaragua, however, was that the business class jumped into the arms of the revolutionary Left, while in El Salvador its counterpart chose an alliance with murderous factions in the army. The frustrations felt by the American policy-makers who surveyed these choices would be comic were they not so fraught with consequence.

In his account of the fall of the Shah of Iran—a failure on a much grander scale—Feinberg suggests that too close an association with the United States is invariably a kiss of death for Third World rulers; to that end, the Shah's fall and its aftermath are seen by him as unavoidable. But one wonders whether the outcome of that chaotic situation was as foreordained as Feinberg implies. By the time the Iranian generals resorted to force, they had none at their disposal. But what if the military had remained cohesive long enough to move against the clerics? A military government with a figurehead monarch might have offered an alternative for Iran. Such a regime could conceivably have been evolving by now into a shaky democracy—as juntas in Argentina, Brazil, and Turkey have done.

FEINBERG finds solace for American failures in the comparably poor record of the Soviet Union. That the Soviets have had their problems in the Third World is undeniable. It is true that their alliance with Cuba is both durable and fruitful; that they have greatly improved their position in Syria, Libya, and Southern Yemen; and that they now control the governments of Ethiopia, Angola, and of course Afghanistan. But they have undergone some significant reversals as well (Egypt, Somalia, and earlier the major splits with Yugoslavia and China). Feinberg notes that recent Soviet gains have come in the poorer and less developed of Third World countries, while in those nations with a substantive indigenous bureaucracy and a large cadre of educated citizens, Soviet hegemony has proved transient, and is receding. The Russians have little economic aid to give, and what they do give is not very useful. They lack the financial leverage that would enable their clients' economies to achieve a more fruitful relationship with the world market.

Several times Feinberg repeats that the Soviets can afford no "second Cubas," and he solemnly relates that he was told this by a ranking Soviet official. His chief point, however, is that Soviet failures are not the consequence of American diplomatic or military intervention. Soviet influence in the Third World is automatically self-limiting, constrained by economic weakness and the gravitational pull of the Western-dominated world market.

This analysis would be encouraging if it were more convincing. The Soviet reversals Feinberg mentions all occurred between ten and thirty-five years ago, when the Soviet capacity to project military power around the world was far less than it is today. The Yugoslav defection (whose lessons, Feinberg suggests, should be made into an organizing principle of American diplomacy) took place when Stalin had to factor American nuclear superiority into his calculation of the many difficulties he might face in attempting the military subjugation of Titoism. Were his successors required to render "fraternal assistance" to one of the Eastern European states today, their assessment of the probable Western response would be rather different.

Nor was American strength irrelevant to Egypt's defection from the Soviet camp. Certainly cultural and economic factors contributed much to Egyptian restlessness, but Feinberg quotes Nasser himself to the effect that the main problem was Egyptian impatience with Soviet military caution. The Egyptians saw the kind of aid America was willing to provide to its allies, and were duly impressed. Yet no one who looks at the shifts that have taken place in the Soviet-American military balance since 1970 can easily imagine that Egypt's change of course would reproduce itself in quite the same way today.

FEINBERG is concerned that an American policy of containing Communism in the Third World may risk embroiling the United States in conflicts where its vital interests are not at stake. That American interests are hierarchical, and that American power to influence events is limited, are truisms understood by the most unequivocal of anti-Communists. A convincing case can be made that it is not of primary importance to American foreign policy whether or not *certain* nations in the Third World declare themselves on the Marxist-Leninist path to development. As Feinberg points out, David Rockefeller can do business with any of them. But in those areas of the Third World which are of greatest concern to American policy-makers, Feinberg's case for diplomatic disengagement errs on the side of imprudence.

The Intemperate Zone has little to say, for example, about the possible consequences of an American diplomatic and military disengagement from the Persian Gulf. The Arab states there, in spite of their great wealth, are sociologically quite similar to the areas in which Soviet-Cuban penetration has been most successful in the past several years. They are, in other words, just emerging from feudalism, and their educated and modernizing classes are small. A coup d'état in one or several of the Gulf states, followed by a rapid infusion of Cuban troops (on station in nearby Southern Yemen) and East German security personnel, would, if met by Western passivity, quickly tear the economic map of the world to tatters.

Feinberg's case for American complacency about political developments in Central America is equally problematic. It is highly likely that a string of Marxist-Leninist regimes in Central America—the "revolution without borders" spoken of by the present Sandinista junta—would raise the possibility of a Communist insurgency in Mexico. Would this not have incalculable consequences for the *domestic*

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structure of the United States? At the very least, questions would emerge about the allegiances and intentions of the millions of Mexican immigrant workers here, with predictably perilous implications for America's social fabric and civil liberties.

How is it that a writer like Feinberg can survey the Third World and see a burgeoning global economy emerging to America's benefit, where another, regarding the same world, sees real dangers? Part of the answer may be that Feinberg overestimates the extent to which human beings are guided and motivated by their economic self-interest, rationally conceived. This is a predilection common to Americans, but it is flawed. Economic self-interest may well be what motivates most men, most of the time, but it is rarely a decisive factor when political structures of long duration become unglued, and history starts to happen. Here ideology or, more simply, the words which move men to passion and action, assumes the reins.

To ignore the words is to be perpetually surprised when others take them seriously. An America that tried to follow Feinberg's advice and accommodate itself to Communist revolutions would meet its greatest difficulties precisely on this point. The Sandinistas, for example, came to power in a nation whose economy had been decimated by civil war, earthquake, and Somoza's simple plunder. In a well-meant attempt at cooptation, the United States immediately showered them with aid. One would suppose that, if they were being true to their economic self-interest, they would have refrained from immediately importing Cuban agit-prop teams and intimidating their own business elites, labor unions, and middle-class supporters, not to speak of funneling arms to the Communist insurgents in El Salvador. But this is exactly what they did. Why they did it will always be somewhat of an enigma to a non-totalitarian, but it is empirically quite verifiable that Communists always behave this way when they come to power, and it is not realistic to imagine otherwise.

Near the end of *The Intemperate Zone*, Feinberg suggests that we would enjoy more national security if we paid greater heed to the performance of our civilian industries in global markets. No doubt this is sage advice, but the democratic idea demands more. If exports were the most appropriate measure of global influence, contemporary Japan would be the most powerful nation in the history of the world. If Americans want free institutions to thrive at home and have a fighting chance in the world, they simply must stake out a presence, both diplomatically and, where prudence demands, militarily. If not, the sworn enemies of democracy are likely to prevail by default.

Joshua and Bashevis

THE BROTHERS SINGER. By CLIVE SINCLAIR. *Allison & Busby/Schocken. 176 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by
ANITA SUSAN GROSSMAN

THE publication of *The Brothers Singer* by Clive Sinclair, an English novelist and critic, brings some welcome attention to the work of Israel Joshua Singer, one of the greatest of Yiddish novelists and the man whom Isaac Bashevis Singer called "my older brother and master." Both were born into the pious household of a hasidic Polish rabbi; as young men, both rebelled against a life of Orthodoxy; and both moved to Warsaw to become part of the Yiddish literary life there.

The success of I.J. Singer's first collection of short stories, *Pearls* (1922), led to his association with the New York-based *Jewish Daily Forward*, and his enormously popular novel *Yoshe Kalb* brought him to America on the invitation of Maurice Schwartz, who produced the stage version. Singer stayed in America to write his masterpiece, *The Brothers Ashkenazi* (1936), about the rise and fall of rival Jewish magnates in Lodz. This was fol-

ANITA SUSAN GROSSMAN, *a new contributor, has taught at the University of Texas at El Paso and at DePauw University. Her articles have appeared in* Twentieth Century Literature *and the (London)* Jewish Quarterly.

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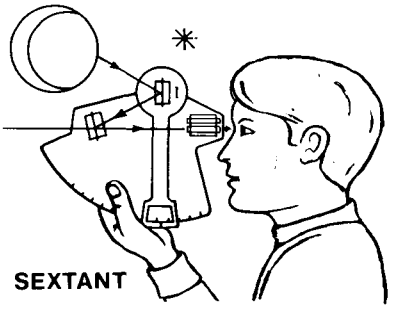

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lowed by *East of Eden* ("Comrade Nakhman" in the original Yiddish title), an ironic study of a true believer in Communism who has transferred his early religious allegiance to a secular messianism.

In his youth Singer had welcomed the Russian Revolution—until, living in Kiev after World War I, he witnessed its effects close at hand. A few years later he returned to Russia as a correspondent for the *Forward*; his critical reports were collected into a book entitled *The New Russia* (1927). Singer's last completed novel, *The Family Carnovsky*, traces the progressive effects of assimilation on a family of German Jews. He died suddenly at the age of fifty in 1944, at the height of his fame and in the midst of writing his childhood memoirs, posthumously published as *Of a World That Is No More*.

I.J. Singer's literary influence on his younger brother Isaac was profound, despite the differences in their styles and temperaments. He has been called the last of the 19th-century novelists, a writer of long family sagas in the realistic manner, in contrast to I.B. Singer, who, although capable of writing novels in that vein (*The Family Moskat*, *The Manor*), is regarded primarily as a master in the realm of fantasy and in the form of the short story or moral fable.

WHILE there is a good deal of truth to this general view of the differences between the brothers, there are also striking resemblances in their *oeuvre*. The line between realist and fantasist, indeed, becomes blurred when one compares their two successful short novels, Joshua's *Yoshe Kalb* (1933) and Bashevis's *Satan in Goray* (1935). As Sinclair points out, both novels are based in part on the Jewish life the brothers observed in their own home and in the town of Bilgoray, the scene of their grandfather's rabbinical court. Both works rely heavily on Jewish folklore, and both portray communities torn apart by the violence of repressed passions in conflict with the prohibitions of traditional Jewish life. In dealing with belief in the wondrous and supernatural, both writers maintain a neutral tone. As a result, we are plunged into their world in all its strangeness and immediacy, without any attempt on the part of the author to interpret, moralize, or rationalize it.

Equally evident is the resemblance between the brothers' longer novels, concerned as they are with the fate of European Jewry as it is embodied in the history of a single family. Joshua, who died before witnessing the full extent of the Holocaust, describes in his novels the impending destruction of the Jewish community from forces within as well as without. Less tolerant than his younger brother of hasidic mysticism, he saw *shtetl* life as intellectually stifling and physically oppressive, rife with poverty, filth, and superstition. Yet once the Jews put the *shtetl* behind them, and abandoned Orthodoxy for "enlightenment," they seemed to him to find no place for themselves in Western society. Certainly none of the modern political ideologies they encountered—nationalism, fascism, Communism—promised anything but evil for the Jews, and those deluded assimilationists in his fiction who think otherwise are inevitably disillusioned.

This predicament is at the center of Joshua's *The Brothers Ashkenazi* and *The Family Carnovsky* and of Bashevis's *The Family Moskat* and *The Manor* (first published in English in two volumes as *The Manor* and *The Estate*), all of which describe the breakup of traditional Jewish family life over several generations as it falls under the influence of modern ideas. The difference, as Sinclair and others have pointed out, is that Joshua is more interested in portraying the social and political milieu, and in characters who act out the drama of vast impersonal forces of history. Bashevis, more concerned with the individual's internal dilemmas, depicts characters torn between Orthodoxy and what they regard as its only alternative, a life of sinful licentiousness. (Thus in Bashevis's novel *The Magician of Lublin*, Yasha Mazur is literally and figuratively a tightrope walker, spanning both the Jewish and Gentile worlds; when finally forced to choose, he abandons his profligate ways and immures himself as a penitent, becoming a kind of holy man to visiting pilgrims.)

THE more one compares these two writers, the more one sees in each of them. From this perspective Clive Sinclair's book has many useful things to say. It is especially good in the first chapter, which recounts the early life of the Singer family by collating the accounts of Bashevis and Joshua, in their respective memoirs, with the forgotten autobiographical novel by their sister Esther Kreitman, entitled *Deborah*. (Sinclair has recently written an introduction for a new English edition of this book.) The author elegantly traces the autobiographical roots of characters, situations, and themes in each of the brothers' work, and in later chapters points to the abiding concerns of each by comparing telling details of their fiction.

Unfortunately, despite many astute observations and intelligent generalizations, this book is not as good as it should be. Part of the problem lies in its method of organization or, rather, lack thereof. Sinclair trudges resolutely through Joshua's five novels in chronological order, with discussions thrown in of Bashevis's novels *Satan in Goray* (in conjunction with *Yoshe Kalb*), *The Manor* (in conjunction with *The Brothers Ashkenazi*), and *The Family Moskat* (immediately after a discussion of *The Family Carnovsky*). Treating them in this way gives Sinclair the opportunity to make interesting cross-comparisons, but all too frequently the discussion degenerates into mere summary of the individual plots, which are recounted in stupefying detail. In the absence of some large general point, some argument or thesis, one comes away from this book all too aware of the trees but still looking for the forest. Significantly, Sinclair offers neither an introduction explaining his aims and methods nor any conclusion; instead, like many a student term paper, the book simply stops abruptly when it reaches a certain number of pages.

The Brothers Singer is also hampered by the author's evident lack of Yiddish scholarship. His almost exclusive reliance on English translations of the brothers' books and

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English-language works about them prevents him from introducing any new biographical or bibliographical information, or from examining the style of the works in detail. He is also precluded from discussing works of I.J. Singer that have not yet been translated, such as his journalism and short stories, or from assessing his role as an editor of *Literary Pages* in Warsaw during the 1920's. What is more puzzling is that Sinclair has also chosen to omit any discussion of Joshua's short stories, long available in the English-language collection *The River Breaks Up* (1938; reprinted 1975). In fact, Sinclair has nothing whatever to say about Joshua's four volumes of collected short stories, including *Pearls*, which first made his literary reputation.

Another minor but very irritating deficiency in the book is the great number of punctuation errors which disfigure the text in such systematic profusion as to suggest authorial ignorance rather than merely careless proofreading.

In short, *The Brothers Singer*, skimpy and diffuse at the same time, promises much more than it delivers. Devoted admirers of the Singer brothers will probably want to read it anyway, in the absence, so far, of anything better.

Working

THE RAILROADERS. By STUART LEUTHNER. *Random House. 152 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

THIS is a book about thirty-two people who made railroads run, including two women—one a brakeman (brakeperson?), the other a crew caller—and two blacks, one a chef on the 20th Century Limited, the other a porter in Grand Central Station. Each tells a brief life story in his own words, illustrated with photographs saved in attics or albums.

In this age in which old artifacts varying from primitive nickel-silver fishing reels to early Oldsmobiles evoke a nostalgic sense of loss that seems close to bathos, the stories here, almost entirely devoted to steam locomotives, could have been the occasion for idolatry of the behemoths of pre-gasoline transport. We could have been told how much better it was to shovel coal on a rocking locomotive platform than to breathe auto exhaust poisons. We could have heard that nothing will ever again be so wonderful as when the water level dropped and the superheated steam in the boiler made you go 110 miles an hour until the tubes burst.

Or in the same age in which, whether or not related to nostalgia, it has become fashionable (*à la* Studs Terkel) to record the voices of the working class in order to attack modern industrial life as corrupt, exploitative, and essentially meaningless, this book could have amounted to just another denigration of capitalism.

The Railroaders is neither. On the contrary, these separate life stories give us a picture of people whose jobs, even when menial, stimulated their pride and gratified what Veblen loosely called "the instinct of workmanship." Interestingly, pride is evident not only in the engineer who advanced by spending his nights studying the theory of thermodynamics and who learned to adjust the delicate but rugged valves whose precise alignment made his locomotive run smoothly, but even in the Grand Central Station porter, Oswald Thorne. In discussing his career at the station, Thorne sets forth an analysis of the passengers whose bags he carried to the crack overnight trains:

> You got so you could prejudge a person—if they were going to be a good, a mediocre, or just a plain bad tipper. Those who smoked pipes, they were usually conservative and they never gave you too much. Somebody smoking a cigarette or carrying an attaché case that looked like it might have some whiskey in it, they were good tippers. You got so you could tell by the luggage.

Thorne's all-time favorite was Jimmy Durante: "Always had a $10 bill in his hand no matter how many bags he had."

ROGER STARR *is a member of the Editorial Board of the* New York Times.

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Thorne's pride made his job more than simply a matter of choosing the right bags to lift. On one occasion, he recalls, the Wolverine, headed for Detroit, was mistakenly put on the wrong Grand Central track, while a train to Chicago was standing where the Wolverine should have been. The family whose bags he was carrying wanted the Wolverine, but they arrived in the station so early that he stored their luggage on the Chicago-bound train occupying the Wolverine's proper spot before they themselves had boarded the train. Suddenly, it started out of the station. Instead of simply letting the bags go to Chicago while their bereft owners, sans nightwear and toothbrushes, went to Detroit, Thorne stayed aboard the Chicago train to Harmon, New York, sixty miles or so up the track, where all New York Central trains stopped. He took the bags off and waited for more than an hour until the Wolverine arrived at Harmon. "Well," he tells Stuart Leuthner,

> the Wolverine finally comes in and these people are giving me a hard time because they think it's my fault. It was my fault for not checking and that woman looked at me and just shook her head. She wasn't going to pay me and I didn't expect nothing, but I guess she was happy to get her bags back after all that.

A memorable vignette is contributed by Irene Ingison, who did not like being a secretary or a nurse, and joined the New York Central as a brakeman during the war, only to spend the rest of her working life on the railroad, much of it in the East Syracuse yards. There, as an outdoor switch tender, she was threatened with the loss of her job because of her sex when the yards were modernized and the workforce reduced in 1968. She fought and won in court, but, finding work opportunities limited in Syracuse, she then moved to Buffalo. Her words on going there:

> I'll tell you, they were surprised when I drove into the Buffalo yard for the first time. I went up there in a pair of pink shorts and my hair up in curlers. I walked into the caller's office and asked to see his seniority book as far back as 1944. The guy didn't give me a hard time. He had heard there were women brakemen in Syracuse, but he hadn't seen one. Evidently he must have figured I knew what I was talking about. Talking seniority, 1944. I looked over the book and then I asked him what jobs were up for bid. I looked these over and then told him to tell that guy, there, he's bumped Monday. You should have heard him. Here I was walking into his railroad in my pink shorts and bumping one of his men. Oh, Christ, we had more laughs. The guys treated me great. They really did.

If these two stories are exceptional, it is not for the feeling Mr. Thorne and Mrs. Ingison express for their jobs, but only because most of the other narratives in this book describe the work of people actually on the trains. These people came into railroading either to carry on a family tradition or to rebel against a family tradition—farming, for example. Often they quit school and wandered around the country before ending up in a job that required strength and will but no particular education. The suggestion is irresistible that schooling is a relatively insignificant part of preparation for a working life, even one that ultimately demands a measure of technical know-how and theoretical understanding of underlying principles. *The Railroaders* is by no means a statistical study, but on the railroads, at least, dropouts who left home seemed to do as well as those who came from traditional homes and full families.

What accounts for the enthusiasm for work this volume exudes—as opposed to today's widespread impression that it is the exceptional American who enjoys working? Perhaps steam railroaders are a specially situated group who derive intense satisfaction from the nature of the equipment with which they work: its immense power, its gift of mobility, and yet its comprehensible technology that permits and rewards the involvement of the workman in its proper functioning. Or perhaps the railroad unions—often favorably mentioned by the contributors to this book—helped build a special spirit among an elite, who could preen themselves on the importance of their role in keeping America ahead of the world, and were well paid in consequence.

THE stories in the book cover the shift from steam to diesel engines, and the narrators, while welcoming the increased ease and comfort of the diesel over the old steam cab and the new freedom from having to stop every hundred-fifty miles to take on water and coal, clearly feel that something vital went out of railroading with the change. Yet they do recognize the reasons for it. The steam engine, for all its overt power, was grossly inefficient. A good engineer could minimize coal and water consumption by adjusting his valves, and by careful use of the throttle he could level out the grades of the roadbed; but the engine wasted far more heat than it put to work. So the steam engineers sighed, but for the most part accepted the inevitable replacement of the machines they loved by the more efficient diesel engine.

The feeling for railroading itself, however, has hardly disappeared with the steam engine. Even in the diesel age, much of the excitement has remained—the swift movement through the countryside, the control of an immense concentration of power, the sense of being part of a team all of whose members must coordinate in order to achieve the objective of moving freight and passengers quickly and well.

The "well" is important—and too easily forgotten. Even the changed and advanced technologies that govern much of the workplace today leave room for distinguishing between the well and the badly handled. And the same is true in many of the more menial jobs that are part of the service sector, as in the cases of those railroaders, like Mr. Thorne and Mrs. Ingison, who were not sitting in the cabs of the great locomotives. They found satisfaction in their work because they expected to find it, and they expected to find it because satisfaction in work well done, and acceptance of the authority of skill and experience, were natural attitudes in the America of sixty and seventy years ago in which these people were raised.

The weight of the culture has

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since been brought to bear against work pride; nowadays just about the only activities in which one starts with the assumption that work is not self-defeating are athletics, the arts, and pure science. By contrast, the people chronicled in *The Railroaders* started with the assumption that willingness to work hard is itself a virtue. Nostalgia for that attitude is the sinew that holds their stories together. It is, by all odds, a more productive nostalgia than the longing for a return of the steam locomotive and its whistle that called in the night to restless rural folk to join an America on the move.

The Media & the Message

CHANNELS OF POWER: THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION ON AMERICAN POLITICS. By AUSTIN RANNEY. *Basic Books. 207 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by
A. LAWRENCE CHICKERING

SINCE the major expansion of network news in the early 1960's, television has become a significant factor in American political life. And because this same period has seen far-reaching changes in our political arrangements, many people have been led to wonder whether television itself may not be, at least in part, at their root. This question underlies Austin Ranney's new book, *Channels of Power: The Impact of Television on American Politics.*

The pervasiveness of television's influence is suggested by the staggering increases in television-set ownership and viewing in the past three decades. Between 1947 and 1955, the percentage of American homes owning television sets rose from less than 1 to 65 percent; today, almost everybody has a TV set. The average person, on graduating from high school, has spent 12,000 hours with teachers, but 22,000 hours watching television.

With these and other such figures as background, Ranney addresses the fundamental issue of what, in the television age, constitutes "political reality." If, he asks, "a tree falls in a forest but the event is not videotaped or broadcast on the nightly news, has it really happened?" Television newscasters insist that the reality that exists "out there" is unaffected by their reporting of it. Ranney, however, following Heisenberg's uncertainty principle—that the observer cannot avoid changing the reality of what he observes—makes a very strong case that TV reporting of political events has, indeed, had profound (and frequently harmful) effects on our political life.

The problem of media involvement in the news is most evident in what the sociologist Michael Robinson has called "medialities"—"events that, in the absence of television, would not take place at all or would take place in a different manner." These include the staging of events by politicians or political activists to provide the "good visuals" necessary for effective television coverage. Examples are protest demonstrations, "walk-abouts" by political candidates, interviews, and so on. Televised debates of presidential candidates are probably the most conspicuous medialities—often providing these real events with a very different "reality" and thus exercising a decisive impact on the outcome of political campaigns (as in 1960 and again in 1976).

Then there is the critical question of media "bias." As study after study has shown, most elite TV journalists are political liberals. Ranney, however, along with others, believes that television's principal "bias problem" is not ideological but "structural"—that is, it inheres in the medium itself. The major sources of this bias are the profit motive, which tilts the editing process toward visually interesting and exciting stories, especially conflict and controversy; time limitations, forcing television to be a "headline service" that makes selection and editing its "very essence"; and legal constraints such as the fairness doctrine.

If TV journalists have a nonstructural bias, says Ranney, it is a

A. LAWRENCE CHICKERING, *who reviewed Lester C. Thurow's* Dangerous Currents *in our November 1983 issue, is currently writing a book on the intellectual Left.*

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tendency, which they share with print journalists, to look for wrongdoing in high places and to focus on narrow self-interest as the very basis of political life. Yet while television stands in this sense in an adversary relation to politics, Ranney also notes the ways in which the relation between the two is symbiotic. Television reporters need the "good visuals" which only politicians can supply, and politicians need the rewards, especially in the form of free publicity, which only television can confer upon them. Indeed, television has proved useful to politicians as a means of appealing to voters directly, rather than through the traditional political vehicles.

It is in this connection that Ranney sees television as a cause of declining confidence in political institutions generally (and of declining voter turnout in elections). By increasing the importance of money in winning elections—money, that is, to buy TV time—and by emphasizing the theatrical dimensions of electoral politics, television has weakened the role of political parties. Television also provides too much information for most voters, and thus turns them away both from the political process itself and from its participants.

Finally, television has added to the burdens of governing. It has created a "fast-forward" effect on the electorate, increasing its expectation of results and shrinking the time that policy-makers have to implement programs. This is particularly evident in economic policy, where changes usually require substantial time to produce the desired result. In addition, television has weakened all coalition-building institutions by sabotaging the backstage maneuvering that is essential to the process of accommodation and compromise—making visible what in the past was hidden, and reducing policy options by publicizing leaks. A major effect of all this has been to transfer power from highly visible elected officials to the bureaucracy, which can operate in secrecy and anonymity.

What then does Ranney see as a way out? He does not believe that the current proliferation of alternatives to network television (cable, pay TV) will weaken the networks' dominance of news reporting—although he warns that it may increase the power of special-interest groups by enhancing their capacity to mobilize their audiences. In the end, Ranney's only recommendation is to encourage television to include *itself* as part of the news. "Why not have on each network each week," he writes,

> at least one hour of prime time devoted to regular broadcasts about the television business, including its coverage of politics? For example, why not show us how the nightly news is produced—how those in charge decide to broadcast certain stories but not others; how much of the footage available for a particular story is used, what is included and why, what is left out and why?

In effect, such a practice would "demythologize" network television and help make it a more "normal" facet of our political life.

THIS is a well-written, timely, and extremely thoughtful book. Yet its analysis seems to me troublingly incomplete. The problem has to do with Ranney's repeated statements of belief in the good intentions of television journalists, and his equally frequent assertion that television's bias is not ideological or substantive but structural. This is, in fact, exactly what a television journalist would say in his own behalf; it is what television journalists do say whenever they are subjected to substantive criticism. In them, it is an obviously self-serving response, a bid to be exempt from scrutiny. But there is no reason why anyone else need accept this assertion.

Indeed, despite his stress on structural bias, Ranney himself reveals the important role played by substantive bias in TV journalism, although he somewhat misstates its nature. Television reporters are not biased against *all* politicians, only against politicians of a particular (mostly traditional) kind. Politicians who declare themselves in *opposition* to "politics"—such as Jerry Brown (especially in his first California gubernatorial campaign) and Jimmy Carter (also in his first campaign)—often become the darlings of the media. And when such "anti-political" politicians are men of the Left they are especially beloved.

This raises the related issue of whether television does, as Ranney maintains, necessarily reduce the government's power to act. To the contrary, one can imagine circumstances in which television's weakening of traditional political institutions could greatly *increase* the power of a certain kind of President, namely one tempted to circumvent the normal checks and balances and appeal directly to the people through the media. (To be sure, he would have to be a President who suited the ideological attitudes of television journalists in the first place. A demagogic Richard Nixon would not do.)

Ranney's suggestion that television demythologize itself and become self-critical would of course serve as an important safeguard against such an occurrence. Unfortunately, there is no chance the networks will take up his recommendation—for reasons which would themselves be interesting to explore. The reasons do not, I think, center on the issue of structural bias.

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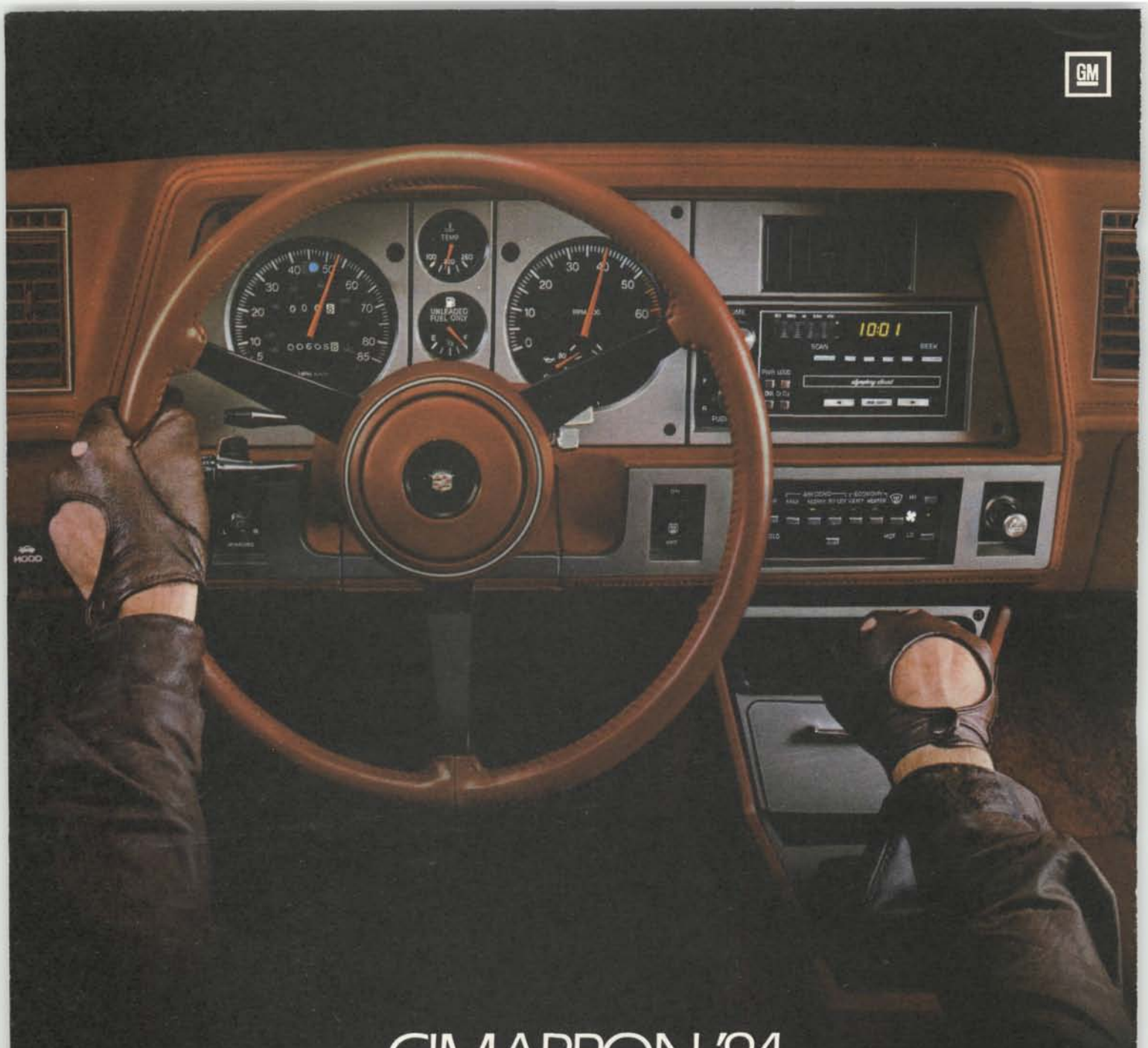

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